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PUBLIC OPINION AND THE PANAMA CANAL TREATIES OF 1977

TED J. SMITH III AND
J. MICHAEL HOGAN

Abstract In April 1978, after nine months of national debate, the Senate narrowly ratified new Panama Canal treaties. Voting was apparently influenced by numerous opinion polls, which were seen as showing increased support for the treaties. But several analysts have shown that this interpretation was erroneous; public opinion consistently opposed the treaties. This study attempts to determine what went wrong. It begins by arraying and analyzing all national poll results on the topic in order to establish a coherent picture of public opinion. It then identifies a number of polling and reporting practices which may have contributed to the misinterpretation of the findings. The study concludes with recommendations for alleviating these problems.

On 6 September 1977, Presidents Jimmy Carter of the United States and Omar Torrijos of Panama met in Washington to sign two new treaties governing the status of the Panama Canal. The first, known as the Panama Canal Treaty, acknowledged Panama's sovereignty over the Canal Zone and provided for the United States to gradually shift complete control of the Canal to Panama by the year 2000. The second, known as the Neutrality Treaty, provided for a permanent regime of neutrality after the year 2000.

TED J. SMITH III is Assistant Professor of Rhetoric and Communication Studies at the University of Virginia. J. MICHAEL HOGAN is Associate Professor of Speech Communication and American Studies at Indiana University. The study was supported by two grants from the Research Policy Council of the University of Virginia. The authors are deeply indebted to Bernard Roshco and Alvin Richman of the U.S. Department of State, who provided extensive assistance at several stages of the study but bear no responsibility for its conclusions. The authors would also like to thank the following individuals for their invaluable contributions: Lauren Ball, Margaret Campbell, Laurily Epstein, Kathleen Frankovic, Hannah Jelinek, Andrew Kohut, Colleen McMurray, Walter Mears, Harry O'Neill, Burns Roper, Roger Seasonwein, Lois Timms, and G. Evans Witt.

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Ratification of the treaties was in doubt from the outset. But they were approved by the Foreign Relations Committee in January, and consideration by the full Senate began on 8 February 1978. Over two months later, after the second longest treaty debate in history, both were ratified by identical 68–32 votes, just one vote more than the required two-thirds majority. Most observers agree that two amendments to the Neutrality Treaty were crucial in securing even this narrow margin of approval. Known as the "leadership amendments," they were intended to clarify U.S. rights to defend the neutrality of the Canal and to have priority passage in military emergencies after the year 2000.

Opinion polls figured prominently in the Senate's decision to ratify the amended treaties. Although early polls all showed widespread opposition to the pacts, treaty supporters claimed that a number of later polls showed a dramatic "turnabout" in public opinion. As Moffett (1985:114) has argued, these later findings apparently "provided the critical margin of safety for undecided senators hard-pressed by vocal opponents of ratification at home." More specifically, the "turnabout" was attributed to the leadership amendments and the success of efforts to "educate" the public about provisions of the treaties. Conservative senators vigorously contested this interpretation of polling results. But as Hogan (1985:311) has argued, the pro-treaty portrait of public opinion prevailed, "influencing the procedures and the outcome of the Senate debate."

Unfortunately, it appears that this pro-treaty interpretation was wholly erroneous. After examining 23 polls for evidence of "trends," Roshco (1978:562) concluded: "The trend that was confirmed most strongly could have been graphed with a straight horizontal line." Similarly, Moffett (1985:116) determined from a study of 34 polls that "public opinion on the Panama Canal treaties remained almost completely static. Despite one of the most extensive public relations efforts undertaken on any foreign-policy issue in American history, public attitudes never budged."

These conclusions are deeply disturbing. They suggest that the primary result of extensive professional polling on a major foreign policy issue was the massive misinterpretation of public opinion and, arguably, frustration of the public will. This essay attempts to discover what went wrong. It begins by arraying and analyzing the results of all national opinion polls on the Panama Canal conducted during the period of June 1975 through November 1978. Polling practices and the coverage of survey results in six national news media are then examined in order to determine how they may have contributed to erroneous interpretations. The essay concludes with recommendations on how pollsters and journalists might avoid the problems described in the analysis.

Polls on the Panama Canal

At least[1] 42 nationwide surveys, fielded by ten different pollsters, provide evidence of American attitudes about the Panama Canal in the period 1975–1978. These polls have been the subject of two detailed studies; both are problematic. Roshco's analysis (1978) is accurate and perceptive but incomplete. He reports results from only 23 polls, omits mention of some questions from these, and offers no systematic framework for interpreting the full set of findings. Moffett's study (1985) is more comprehensive and provides an analytical system for categorizing questions by content. Again, however, a number of polls and questions are omitted. More important, his discussion is flawed by numerous and often serious errors of fact, analysis, and interpretation.[2] These concerns suggest the need to begin discussion with a description and analysis of all available findings on the topic.

Table 1 presents the responses to 51 questions asked in 42 nationwide surveys.[3] It includes all items designed to measure level of approval of either the Panama Canal treaties or the concept of ceding the Canal to Panama. Excluded are questions about the issues involved, measures of attitudinal intensity and salience, and ratings of congressional and presidential performance.

Perhaps the most striking feature of Table 1 is the great diversity of results it displays. The responses vary from 78%–8% disapproval (ORC item 8) to 65%–25% support (NBC item 26b). In the single month of February 1978, during the height of the Senate debate, findings ranged from 72%–19% against to 54%–40% in favor. Nevertheless, a very rough temporal pattern can be discerned. Specifically, nearly all (25 of 27) items asked prior to January 1978 showed opposition to the

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[1] It is difficult to be certain of the exact number of polls conducted. We are confident that the 42 polls discussed here represent all published and all or nearly all unpublished national surveys on the topic.

[2] These criticisms are documented in Smith and Hogan (1985:7–8), which is available as ERIC Document ED 264 630.

[3] Space limitations preclude giving the text of each question in Table 1. These may be found in Smith and Hogan (1985:10–18). All information about these polls has been confirmed by original news releases, Roper Center data, or direct contact with the pollster. The only exceptions are the five Caddell items. Repeated attempts to verify them were unsuccessful, and so it has been necessary to rely on Roshco (1978) and Moffett (1985) in these instances. Items in Table 1 are ordered by date of first interview and, within surveys, by the actual sequence in which they were asked.

Table 1. National Polls on the Panama Canal Treaties[a]

					Results (%)			Error		Ambiguity		Bias	
Item	Date	Poll[b]	Sample[c]	Type[d]	Pro	Con	Other	Pro	Con	Pro	Con	Pro	Con
1a	Jun 75	ORC	Full	Ia	12	66	22				X		X
1b	Jun 75	ORC	Full	IIa	29	48	23				X		X
2	Apr 76	ORC	Full	Ia	12	75	13				X		X
3	May 76	CBS/NYT	Full	Ib	24	52	24	X			X		
4	Jun 76	Roper	Full	IIb	26	46	28			X			
5	Jun 76	CBS/NYT	Full	Ib	22	57	21	X			X		
6	Jan 77	Roper	Full	IIb	24	53	23			X			
7	Mar 77	YSW	Full	III	29	53	18	X			X		
8	May 77	ORC	Full	Ia	8	78	14				X		X
9	May 77	Caddell	Full?	IIa	27	51	22				X		X
10	Aug 77	NBC	Full	IIa	27	55	18	X			X		
11	Aug 77	Gallup	Full	III	34	42	24	X					X
			Aware	III	37	47	16	X					X
			Unaware	III	24	27	49	X					X
12	Aug 77	Roper	Full	IIb	28	44	28			X			
13	Sep 77	Caddell	Full?	IIa	26	49	25	X					
14	Sep 77	Harris	Full	IIa	26	51	23	X					
15	**Sep 77**	**AP**	**Full**	**IIa**	**29**	**50**	**21**						
16	Sep 77	Roper	Full	IIb	27	53	20			X			
17	Sep 77	Gallup	Full	III	36	46	19					X	
			Aware	III	40	48	12					X	
			Unaware	III	23	39	38					X	
18	**Oct 77**	**Caddell**	**Full?**	**IIb**	**30**	**55**	**15**						
19	Oct 77	NBC	Aware	IIa	30	61	9						X
20a	**Oct 77**	**CBS/NYT**	**Full**	**IIa**	**29**	**49**	**22**						
20b/a	Oct 77	CBS/NYT	Full	III	63	24	13			X			
21	Oct 77	RSA	Full	IIa	28	59	13						X
22a	Oct 77	Roper	Split	IIb	31	50	19			X			
22b	**Oct 77**	**Roper**	**Split**	**III**	**33**	**47**	**20**						

23a	**Dec 77**	**Caddell**	**Full?**	**IIa**	**26**	**53**	**21**					
23b	Dec 77	Caddell	Full?	III	49	30	21		X			
24	Jan 78	Gallup	Full	III	43	37	20				X	
			Aware	III	45	42	13				X	
			Unaware	III	34	16	50				X	
25	**Jan 78**	**CBS/NYT**	**Full**	**IIa**	**29**	**51**	**20**					
26a	Jan 78	NBC	Aware	IIa	28	62	10					X
26b	Jan 78	NBC	Aware	III	65	25	10		X			
27	Jan 78	RSA	Full	IIa	35	55	10					X
28	Feb 78	Caddell	Full?	III	47	37	16		X			
29a	**Feb 78**	**Harris**	**Full**	**IIb**	**31**	**40**	**29**					
29b/c	Feb 78	Harris	Full	III	38	33	29	X			X	
30	Feb 78	ORC	Full	Ia	19	72	9			X		X
31	Feb 78	NBC	Aware	III	54	40	6		X			X
32a	Mar 78	Harris	Full	III	49	41	10				X	
32b	**Mar 78**	**Harris**	**Full**	**IIa**	**29**	**60**	**11**					
32c/d	Mar 78	Harris	Full	III	44	39	17	X			X	
33	Mar 78	NBC	Aware	IIa	35	55	10				X	
34a	**Apr 78**	**CBS/NYT**	**Full**	**IIa**	**30**	**53**	**17**					
34b	Apr 78	CBS/NYT	Full	III	51	35	14				X	
35	**Apr 78**	**Harris**	**Full**	**IIb**	**37**	**44**	**19**					
36	May 78	NBC	Full	III	47	42	11				X	
37	May 78	YSW	Full	III	33	50	17	X		X	X	
38	**Jun 78**	**Roper**	**Full**	**IIb**	**30**	**52**	**18**					
39	**Jun 78**	**Harris**	**Full**	**IIb**	**35**	**49**	**16**					
40	**Sep 78**	**NBC**	**Full**	**IIa**	**34**	**56**	**10**					
41	Oct 78	NBC	Full	III	45	47	8				X	
42	Nov 78	NBC	Full	III	38	49	13				X	

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[a] Findings in boldface are fully valid according to the criteria described in the text.

[b] The following abbreviations have been used: ORC = Opinion Research Corporation, RSA = Roger Seasonwein Associates, YSW = Yankelovich, Skelly, and White.

[c] All samples are from the population of adult Americans except for Yankelovich items 7 and 37 (registered voters) and NBC item 42 (voters).

[d] Type I items focus exclusively on the issue of transferring the Canal to Panama. Type Ia items offer two defined alternatives; Type Ib items offer only one. Type II items mention a treaty on the Canal but do not mention any residual rights granted to the United States. Type IIa items mention both a treaty and transfer of the Canal; Type IIb items mention only a treaty. Type III items refer explicitly to residual United States rights to defend, transit, or operate the Canal.

treaties. But from January to April 1978, during the period of Senate consideration, almost half (8 of 17) of the questions revealed support. After April, nearly all (6 of 7) again showed opposition. This might suggest the occurrence of two "turnabouts" in public opinion: from opposition to support back to opposition.

The first step in understanding public opinion on the treaties is to determine whether these "turnabouts" did in fact occur. The best (some would say the only valid) evidence for this comes from responses of comparable samples to series of identical or nearly identical questions. Such series were rather uncommon. And as Roshco (1978), Robinson and Meadow (1982), and Moffett (1985) have all concluded, they provide no clear evidence of any reversal of opinion. In fact, only Gallup (items 17 and 24) found an actual "turnabout." He traced a shift in net opinion (approval minus disapproval) of 11 percentage points (from −8 to +3) across his aware subsamples between September 30, 1977, and January 9, 1978. Additional evidence of a pro-treaty trend at about this time comes from the Seasonwein series (items 21 and 27), which found a similar 11-point shift between October (−31) and January (−20), and the last two items of the ORC series (items 1a, 2, 8, and 30), which showed a 17-point pro-treaty shift from −70 in May 1977 to −53 in February 1978. But it must be stressed that the final Seasonwein and ORC questions both elicited majority *opposition* to the treaties (55% and 72%, respectively). Further, the change across the full ORC series was only one point, from −54 in June 1975 to −53 in February 1978. Finally and most important, three other series fielded at about the same time as Gallup's (CBS items 20a and 25, NBC items 19 and 26a, and Caddell items 23b and 28) found *decreases* in net support of 2, 3, and 9 points, respectively.[4]

The only other evidence of "turnabouts" comes from the responses to questions which differed substantially. As shown in Table 1 and Table 3 below, four pollsters recorded no fewer than twelve reversals across various pairs of sequential items. But interpretation of these findings is problematic. Given differences in questions, a change in results can be attributed to changes in the questions, the opinions of respondents, or both. While we cannot be certain after the fact which of these alternatives is correct, some insight can be gained by grouping the questions on the basis of obvious similarities of content. If this reveals a clear and consistent pattern of results, the claim that observed changes were the product of question wording gains plausibility.

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[4] Two other series (CBS items 3 and 5 and Roper items 4, 6, 12, and 16) ended too soon to inform the question of the Gallup "turnabout." Regardless, both show decreases in net support. No series extended long enough to inform the question of the second possible "turnabout." The only remaining series (NBC items 41 and 42) is uninterpretable because the items were asked of samples drawn from different populations.

In the case of the Panama Canal treaties, this kind of analysis proves to be quite simple. The 51 items divide readily into three general categories. Type I questions focus exclusively on the issue of transferring the Canal to Panama. They make no reference to a treaty or to any rights the United States might retain after such a transfer is effected. Within this category, questions can be subdivided into those that offer the respondent a choice between two defined alternatives (Type Ia) and those that seek his response to a single option (Type Ib). The Type I questions are:

> Type Ia: Do you favor the United States continuing its ownership and control of the Panama Canal or do you favor turning ownership and control of the Panama Canal over to the Republic of Panama? [ORC items 1a, 2, 8, and 30.]
>
> Type Ib: Do you agree or disagree with the statement that our government should eventually return control of the Panama Canal to the Government of Panama? [CBS items 3 and 5.]

Type II questions make explicit reference to an actual or hypothetical treaty on the Panama Canal but do not mention any rights granted to the United Staes by that treaty. Within this category, questions can be subdivided into those that mention both a treaty and transfer of the Canal (Type IIa) and those that omit reference to the transfer and mention only a treaty (Type IIb). Examples of these questions are:

> Type IIa: Turning to another topic, last week President Carter signed a treaty that means the United States would relinquish control of the Panama Canal by the year 2000. Now the Senate must decide whether or not to ratify the treaty. Do you think the Senate should approve the treaty concerning the Panama Canal? [AP item 15.]
>
> Type IIb: Do you think the time has come for us to modify our Panama Canal treaty, or that we should insist on keeping the treaty as originally signed? [Roper items 4, 6, 12, 16, and 22a in part.]

Type III questions refer explicitly to residual U.S. rights to defend, transit, or operate the Canal. Most also mention both a treaty and transfer of the Canal. Examples of these questions are:

> Type III: In September, the Presidents of the United States and Panama signed two treaties which would gradually turn the Panama Canal over to the Panamanians but would provide for the

> continued use and defense of the Canal by the United States. Before these treaties can take effect, the United States Senate must act on them. Do you think the Senate should vote for the new treaties or against them? [Roper item 22b.]
>
> Type III: Would you favor or oppose approval of the Panama Canal treaty if an amendment were added specifically giving the United States the right to intervene if the Canal is threatened by attack? [NBC items 26b and 31 in part.]

The results of this analysis are summarized in Table 2. It shows that responses within each of the four subcategories (Ia, Ib, IIa, and IIb) are remarkably homogeneous. Regardless of differences in time (up to 39 months), sample (full or aware), pollster, question wording, and response options, variation in any particular response category (Pro/Con/Other) never exceeds 16 percentage points. Further, inspection of Table 2 reveals no evidence of any major trend over time within these four groups. Responses to Type III questions, in contrast, are enormously diverse, ranging from 65%–25% support to 53%–29% opposition. Moreover, these findings follow a rough temporal sequence, from opposition to support to opposition. This outcome is examined more fully below.

Turning to between-group comparisons, the difference in findings for subcategories Ia and Ib suggests that the number of defined alternatives provided to respondents did have a substantial impact. Specifically, the sole Type Ia question (ORC items 1a, 2, 8, and 30, quoted above) offered a clear choice between keeping the Canal and turning it over to Panama. It consistently showed overwhelming opposition to the transfer. The sole Type Ib question (CBS items 3 and 5, quoted above) asked only if the United States should "return control" of the Canal to Panama. Like nearly all other questions on the topic, it described no positive alternative.[5] And it consistently found both higher levels of support for the transfer and higher levels of uncertainty than the ORC question.

A more important conclusion, based on a comparison of categories I and II, is that reference to a "treaty" on the Canal had a strong positive influence on responses. The best evidence of this comes from ORC questions 1a (Type Ia) and 1b (Type IIa), asked sequentially in the same poll. Item 1a, quoted above, found 66%–12% opposition. Item 1b asked:

---

[5] The only major exceptions are the five Roper questions (4, 6, 12, 16, and 22a) that offered a choice between modifying the existing treaty and keeping it as originally signed. It will be shown, however, that these questions incorporate a crucial ambiguity that makes it difficult to interpret their results.

> As you may know, when a treaty is negotiated with a foreign country, the treaty has to be voted on by the U.S. Senate. If a treaty is negotiated turning over ownership and control of the Panama Canal to the Republic of Panama, do you think the U.S. Senate should approve or disapprove such a treaty?

This item found 48%–29% opposition, a positive net shift of 35 points. Additional evidence comes from those instances in which Type I and II questions were asked within a month of each other (items 3 and 4, 5 and 4, 8 and 9, 30 and 29a). All of these pairs show positive shifts of 8 to 44 points.

These findings demonstrate that a significant fraction of the American public, perhaps 15%, may be willing to support ratification of a negotiated treaty even though they oppose its provisions. The explanation for this phenomenon is unclear, but it could reflect strong popular commitments to procedural legality and "keeping our word." Regardless, it implies the need for great care in interpreting poll results on *all* treaty negotiations, including such hardy perennials as strategic arms limitation. In the case at hand, it suggests that the idea of ceding the Canal to Panama may have been even *less* popular than most commentators have concluded. With one exception, all of the questions asked during the period of discussion and ratification of the Carter treaties (items 10 through 34b) made reference to a treaty. The exception, ORC item 30, found 72%–19% opposition.

Table 2 also illuminates a widespread and serious misinterpretation. It is almost an article of faith among treaty supporters that any bald reference to the notion of transfering the Canal somehow biased responses against the treaties. This attitude is evident in Moffett (1985) but is perhaps clearest in an influential article by Harvard professor William Schneider. Published in the *Washington Post* at the start of the ratification process, it was promptly read into the record of the Senate debate by pro-treaty senators. Under the subhead " 'Control' Is the Key Word," Schneider claims (1978:C1):

> A look at all the questions asked over the past year reveals that "control" of the canal has long been the key issue to the American public. Any question which specifies that the United States will hand over control of the canal to Panama elicits strongly negative public reaction—unless the meaning of "control" is further qualified.

There follows (C4) much discussion of Americans' "primordial" attachment to the Canal and of "property rights" as the "most fundamental of American values."

A careful review of all polls reveals that "control" could not have

Table 2. Polls on the Panama Canal Treaties, Grouped by Question Content

				Results (%)							Results (%)		
Type	Item	Date	Sample	Pro	Con	Other	Type	Item	Date	Sample	Pro	Con	Other
I	**All**			**16**	**67**	**17**	IIb	4	6/76	Full	26	46	28
							IIb	6	1/77	Full	24	53	23
Ia	1a	6/75	Full	12	66	22	IIb	12	8/77	Full	28	44	28
Ia	2	4/76	Full	12	75	13	IIb	16	9/77	Full	27	53	20
Ia	8	5/77	Full	8	78	14	IIb	18	10/77	Full?	30	55	15
Ia	30	2/78	Full	19	72	9	IIb	22a	10/77	Split	31	50	19
Ia	**All**			**13**	**73**	**15**	IIb	29a	2/78	Full	31	40	29
							IIb	35	4/78	Full	37	44	19
Ib	3	5/76	Full	24	52	24	IIb	38	6/78	Full	30	52	18
Ib	5	6/76	Full	22	57	21	IIb	39	6/78	Full	35	49	16
Ib	**All**			**23**	**55**	**23**	**IIb**	**All**			**30**	**49**	**22**

II	**All**			**29**	**52**	**19**	**III**	**All**			**45**	**41**	**15**
IIa	1b	6/75	Full	29	48	23	III	7	3/77	Full	29	53	18
IIa	9	5/77	Full?	27	51	22	III	11	8/77	Aware	37	47	16
IIa	10	8/77	Full	27	55	18	III	17	9/77	Aware	40	48	12
IIa	13	9/77	Full?	26	49	25	III	20b/a	10/77	Full	63	24	13
IIa	14	9/77	Full	26	51	23	III	22b	10/77	Split	33	47	20
IIa	15	9/77	Full	29	50	21	III	23b	12/77	Full?	49	30	21
IIa	19	10/77	Aware	30	61	9	III	24	1/78	Aware	45	42	13
IIa	20a	10/77	Full	29	49	22	III	26b	1/78	Aware	65	25	10
IIa	21	10/77	Full	28	59	13	III	28	2/78	Full?	47	37	16
IIa	23a	12/77	Full?	26	53	21	III	29b/c	2/78	Full	38	33	29
IIa	25	1/78	Full	29	51	20	III	31	2/78	Aware	54	40	6
IIa	26a	1/78	Aware	28	62	10	III	32a	3/78	Full	49	41	10
IIa	27	1/78	Full	35	55	10	III	32c/d	3/78	Full	44	39	17
IIa	32b	3/78	Full	29	60	11	III	34b	4/78	Full	51	35	14
IIa	33	3/78	Aware	35	55	10	III	36	5/78	Full	47	42	11
IIa	34a	4/78	Full	30	53	17	III	37	5/78	Full	33	50	17
IIa	40	9/78	Full	34	56	10	III	41	10/78	Full	45	47	8
IIa	**All**			**29**	**54**	**17**	III	42	11/78	Full	38	49	13

NOTE: See Table 1 notes a, c, and d.

been the "key word." Of the 25 questions asked in the year preceding the article (items 7–27), only 9 mentioned "control." Seven of these did elicit negative reactions, but so did 14 of the 16 other items. Nor was it the "key issue," except in the most obvious sense. Recall that Type IIa questions make reference to both a treaty and transfer of the Canal; Type IIb questions mention only a treaty. As shown in Table 2, these groups produced almost identical levels of support and only marginally different opposition. Similarly, the 13 Type III questions that mentioned a treaty, transfer, and residual rights[6] yielded average responses of 45.9% Pro, 40.2% Con, and 13.9% Other; the three Type III items (28, 29b/c, 32a) that mentioned only a treaty and rights (i.e., omitted transfer) produced almost identical average responses of 44.7, 37.0, and 18.3%, respectively. In short, the evidence from Type II and III questions shows that reference to transfer (i.e., "control") of the Canal had no discernible effect on responses.

The key issue seems to have been residual U.S. rights to defend, transit, and operate the Canal, mentioned only in Type III questions. This is apparent in the average responses to Type II and III questions shown in Table 2. But better evidence comes from the six polls (20, 23, 26, 29, 32, 34) in which Type II and III items were asked sequentially of the same sample. All produced strong positive net shifts averaging 45 points. Finally, the only items that found majority or plurality support for the treaties were of Type III.

Of course, not all Type III items elicited support and, as noted, the results in this category are highly diverse. However, it appears that this diversity is largely a product of differences in the description of U.S. defense rights provided by each question.[7] The seven Type III items that found opposition to the treaties simply noted those rights without elaboration (see, e.g., Roper item 22b quoted above). In contrast, those items which found support for the treaties almost always specified either the term or means of enforcement of the rights. Thus some respondents were told that the United States could defend the Canal "always" (item 20b), "forever" (items 23b and 28), "beyond the year 2000" (item 34b), or "even after it is being run by the Panamanians" (item 36). Others were told of U.S. rights to "intervene if the canal is threatened by attack" (items 26b and 31), "send in troops to keep the Canal open" (item 20b), or use "U.S. military force to defend the canal in an emergency" (items 29b and 32c). In general, the stronger the wording of U.S. defense rights, the higher the support for the treaties. More important, the highest levels of support were produced by items 20b/a, 26b, and 31, which suggest the United States would have the right to intervene *unilaterally* to defend the Canal. The sole exception to this analysis, as might be expected, is Gallup item 24. It noted only the right of the United States to "defend the canal against a third nation," but elicited plurality support.

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[6] In some instances (items 20b, 23b, 26b, 32c/d, and 33b) transfer was mentioned only in a preceding item. Yankelovich items 7 and 36 make no reference to a treaty and so are excluded from this analysis.

[7] Only one Type III question (Harris item 32a) omitted reference to United States defense rights. It found plurality support for Senate ratification of a treaty that "made certain that after the year 2000 the canal would be neutral in allowing ships from all countries, including the United States, to go through the canal."

In conclusion, detailed analysis of all available polls shows no evidence of any major trend in opinion on the Panama Canal treaties. At most there may have been a slight increase in support (about 5 points), but only *after* the treaties were ratified in April 1978. The rough temporal pattern shown in Table 1 seems to be an artifact of the widespread tendency of the pollsters to change their question from Type I to II to (strong) III back to II. In particular, there is no firm evidence of any "turnabout" of opinion. This is shown most clearly in Table 3, which lists all instances in which a given pollster charted a reversal of opinion in the same or sequential polls. In 12 of the 13 instances, the "reversal" followed a change in questions, from Type II to III or III to II. The *only* exception is the anomalous Gallup series.

Evaluation of Polling Practices

If one accepts that public opinion on the Panama Canal treaties was static, the problem is then to determine why so many knowledgeable observers formed the erroneous impression that approval had increased. Examination of polling practices reveals three major factors which may have contributed to this misinterpretation. The first is the sheer diversity of questions asked: 40 of the 51 were different. In part, this was an unavoidable consequence of the number of pollsters (ten) who fielded national surveys on the topic. But it was due mostly to the marked tendency of individual pollsters to change questions with great frequency. Given this diversity, it was perhaps inevitable that some partisan or naive observers would see illusory trends in the results.

The second factor is the nature of the questions asked. It has been shown that the pattern of findings corresponds closely to changes in question wording. The problem now is to determine which questions provide appropriate measures of public opinion on the Carter treaties. One solution is to assume that a poll question can be flawed in only three ways: it can be erroneous, ambiguous, or biased. An appropriate question exhibits none of these flaws.

In this analysis, a question is designated *erroneous* if it contains a clear and significant error of fact. As shown in Table 1, ten questions meet this criterion. Six of these (items 3, 5, 7, 10, 14, 37) use the phrases "hand control back," "giving back," or "return control" to

Table 3. Reversals of Opinion in Same or Sequential Polls, by Pollster

					Results (%)			
Poll	Item	Date	Sample	Type	Pro	Con	Other	Net Shift
Caddell	23a	Dec 77	Full?	IIa	26	53	21	
	23b	Dec 77	Full?	III	49	30	21	+46
CBS/NYT	20a	Oct 77	Full	IIa	29	49	22	
	20b/a	Oct 77	Full	III	63	24	13	+59
	20b/a	Oct 77	Full	III	63	24	13	
	25	Jan 78	Full	IIa	29	51	20	−61
	34a	Apr 78	Full	IIa	30	53	17	
	34b	Apr 78	Full	III	51	35	14	+39
Gallup	17	Sep 77	Aware	III	40	48	12	
	24	Jan 78	Aware	III	45	42	13	+11
Harris	29a	Feb 78	Full	IIb	31	40	29	
	29b/c	Feb 78	Full	III	38	33	29	+14
	32a	Mar 78	Full	III	49	41	10	
	32b	Mar 78	Full	IIa	29	60	11	−39
	32b	Mar 78	Full	IIa	29	60	11	
	32c/d	Mar 78	Full	III	44	39	17	+36
	32c/d	Mar 78	Full	III	44	39	17	
	35	Apr 78	Full	IIb	37	44	19	−12
NBC	26a	Jan 78	Aware	IIa	28	62	10	
	26b	Jan 78	Aware	III	65	25	10	+74
	31	Feb 78	Aware	III	54	40	6	
	33	Mar 78	Aware	IIa	35	55	10	−36
	33	Mar 78	Aware	IIa	35	55	10	
	36	May 78	Full	III	47	42	11	+25
	36	May 78	Full	III	47	42	11	
	40	Sep 78	Full	IIa	34	56	10	−27

NOTE: See Table 1 notes c and d.

describe transfer of the Canal to Panama. This implies falsely that at some earlier time Panama had possession or control *of the Canal*. The remaining questions misstate provisions of the treaties (items 11, 13), the existence of changes to them (item 29b), or the treaty to which changes were made (item 32c).[8] All of these errors seem likely to have encouraged pro-treaty responses.

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[8] See Smith and Hogan (1985:28–34) for a more complete discussion of these and other flaws.

A question is *ambiguous* if there is no necessary connection between its findings and some related topic of interest. In the case at hand, we are concerned with public opinion on the treaties negotiated by the Carter Administration. Twenty-one questions are ambiguous with reference to this topic. Eight (items 1a, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 30, 37) make no mention of a treaty but ask instead about the policy of ceding the Canal to Panama. Three others (items 1b, 9, 10), all fielded before the Carter treaties were announced, ask if respondents would support "a" treaty giving ownership and/or control of the Canal to Panama. These are ambiguous because one could oppose the policy of giving up the Canal but support a negotiated treaty which does so, and one could oppose an imaginary treaty with only one provision but support the actual Carter treaties with their guarantees of U.S. rights. Further, it seems likely that these questions would tend to underestimate apparent support for the Carter treaties. Using them for that purpose is therefore equivalent to asking questions with an anti-treaty bias.

Five Roper questions (items 4, 6, 12, 16, 22a) ask if the original Panama Canal treaty should be modified or preserved unchanged. Five other questions (items 20b, 23b, 26b, 28, 31) ask if respondents would support the Carter treaties *if* they contained strong guarantees of U.S. rights. The Roper items are ambiguous because many staunch opponents of the Carter treaties (e.g., Ronald Reagan) were in favor of modifying the original treaty. The hypothetical questions are ambiguous because they describe the Carter treaties not as they are but as they might be. Thus it seems likely that both groups of questions would tend to overestimate apparent support for the Carter treaties. Using them for that purpose is therefore equivalent to asking questions with a pro-treaty bias.

Finally, a question is defined as *biased* if it asserts as true a position that is the subject of serious contention. Two such positions, discussed in detail by Hogan (1986), are mentioned in the treaty questions. The first concerns ownership of the Canal and Canal Zone. Treaty opponents claimed ownership, literal or metaphorical, by the United States; treaty supporters argued that Panama retained ownership under the original treaty but allowed the United States to exercise the rights of ownership and sovereignty. Regardless of which side is correct, 12 questions (items 1a, 1b, 2, 8, 9, 11, 19, 21, 26a, 27, 30, 31) assert or imply U.S. ownership. Because these support the arguments of the treaty opponents, they are coded as biased against approval of the treaties.

The second position concerns U.S. rights to defend and transit the Canal. President Carter claimed that these were defined adequately in the text of the Neutrality Treaty. However, he and President Torrijos of Panama sought to clarify them in a Statement of Understanding issued on October 14, 1977. Critics immediately pointed out that the Statement was not binding. Accordingly, the Senate added the Statement to the Neutrality Treaty in the form of the two so-called "leadership" amendments. But this did not resolve the issue. Treaty supporters claimed that the amendments insured U.S. rights after the year 2000. Treaty opponents disagreed. While the first amendment (U.S., 1979:365–6) does give the United States and Panama "the right to act against any aggression or threat directed against the Canal," it also stipulates that "This does not mean, nor shall it be interpreted as a right of intervention of the United States in the internal affairs of Panama" and that "Any United States action . . . shall never be directed against the territorial integrity . . . of Panama." Similarly, while the second leadership amendment does give U.S. and Panamanian ships priority passage in an emergency, it neither defines "emergency" nor specifies who will determine if one exists (U.S., 1979:374). Because the Canal would be an integral part of Panama and completely under its control, opponents argued that U.S. "rights" were illusory, their exercise subject to Panamanian approval. They therefore sought unsuccessfully to add amendments granting *unilateral* U.S. rights of defense and transit. It is irrelevant for present purposes which interpretation of the leadership amendments is correct. Suffice it to note that this issue dominated the Senate ratification debate and will be resolved only if a "threat" or "emergency" arises after 2000. But 11 questions (items 17, 24, 29b, 32a, 32c, 33, 34b, 36, 37, 41, 42) state categorically that the treaties do give the United States these rights and so are coded as biased in favor of the treaties.

Several important conclusions follow from this analysis. The most obvious is that 38 of the 51 questions, including all that show apparent support for the treaties, are flawed. Great care should be exercised in interpreting this finding. Many questions described as "ambiguous" are perfectly legitimate ones to ask. They become problematic only if used to estimate support for the Carter treaties. And many later questions appear to have been biased as a result of a laudable effort to provide a more comprehensive and fair description of the terms of the treaties. Nevertheless, it is clear that only 13 questions (printed in boldface in Table 1) are fully valid. These show the American public consistently opposed the Carter treaties by a margin of about 5 to 3. Table 1 also reveals that earlier questions tend to be flawed in ways that underestimate apparent support for the treaties; later questions tend to be flawed in ways that overestimate apparent support. The result is a pattern of findings that seems likely to have led some observers to erroneously perceive a "turnabout" in opinion. This pattern, it should be noted, was not produced by merely asking different questions, but by asking differentially flawed questions.

The third factor that may have misled observers is the interpretation of results provided by pollsters. The 10 polls that found apparent support for the treaties are of particular interest. Three of these (items 23a–b, 28, 29a–c) were private, and full reports of their results have not been publicly released. A fourth (item 36) was fielded after ratification. Of the remainder, examination of the original news releases reveals serious misinterpretations in four of the six cases. All of the misinterpretations favor the pro-treaty position.

Consider the identical September (item 17) and January (item 24) Gallup polls. Both began with a filter item on awareness and then asked their aware subsamples three questions designed to measure knowledge of "key facts" about the treaties: the year the Canal will be turned over to Panama ("correct" answers: 2000 or 1999), whether the United States will retain defense rights (yes), and how much the "biggest U.S. aircraft carriers and supertankers" use the Canal (not at all). Last, all respondents were asked a Type III approval item. Results from both polls show a 7% increase in awareness (to 81%), persistent ignorance of the "key facts," the famous "turnabout" in approval, and relatively high support (51%–46% and 57%–39%) in the "better informed" subsamples (those who answered all three knowledge questions correctly). The September news release (Gallup, 1977:1) emphasizes the knowledge findings. Under the headlines "Lack of Knowledge Is Widespread" and "Support for Panama Treaties Increases with Knowledge," it reports progressively higher approval in the unaware, aware, and "better-informed" subsamples. The January release leads with the "turnabout" results but stresses (Gallup, 1978:1) the "important finding" that "the more Americans know about the Panama Canal treaties, the more likely they are to favor Senate ratification."

This interpretation delighted treaty supporters such as Senator Paul Sarbanes, who read the text of the January news release into the record of the Senate debate. Indeed, the embattled Carter Administration had claimed from the outset that the public, initially ignorant, would support the treaties once it understood them, and had launched a massive "public education" campaign to secure that understanding. Gallup's repeated findings of widespread ignorance and a link between knowledge and support, even more than the "turnabout," provided direct confirmation of the Carter view from an independent and highly respected source. Unfortunately, the Gallup interpretation is seriously flawed.

One problem is that the questions about "key facts" do not provide an adequate index of knowledge. The first and third questions are factual, but of doubtful significance. The second question is significant, but it cannot be described as factual. It asked ". . . will the United

States have the right to defend the Panama Canal against third-nation attacks . . . ?" and specified "yes" as the correct answer. But in March 1978, for only the second time in U.S. history, the Senate added binding amendments to a negotiated treaty. A major purpose of these "leadership" amendments was to establish that the United States did have the right to defend the Canal. Therefore many senators must have thought that this right was in doubt. The Gallup interviews were conducted in September and January, well before the amendments were formally proposed. Thus, at those times, it was not a "fact" that the treaties granted that right. It was at best an *opinion,* dominant only among treaty supporters. This suggests a wider problem. The "facts" addressed by the knowledge questions are "key" only to the pro-treaty arguments that the pacts secure United States control until the year 2000 and guarantee defense rights thereafter, and that the Canal is of declining importance because it cannot be used by the largest U.S. ships.[9] Obviously, treaty opponents would nominate a different set of facts as "key." Thus Gallup's "better-informed" subsamples are best described as those who knew and accepted certain pro-treaty facts and opinions. It is neither surprising nor illuminating to find relatively high levels of treaty support in these groups.

A further problem involves several crucial omissions. The September news release (Gallup, 1977) reports the size of the "better-informed" group (1 in 14) and the rate of correct responses for the knowledge questions (26%, 43%, and 14%), all computed for the full sample. The January release (Gallup, 1978) omits the size of the "better-informed" group and reports correct response rates of 20%, 54%, and 24%. This might suggest an increase in knowledge commensurate with the increase in support found by the January poll. But the reality is much different. Inspection of the original data held by the Roper Center[10] shows that the figures in the January release are for the "aware" subsample, with the first and third figures transposed. When computed for the full sample, the January data actually show slight *decreases* in the average percentage of correct response per question (from 27.7% to 26.9%) and the size of the "better-informed" groups (from 6.6% to 5.5%). Thus we are faced with the curious finding of an increase in treaty support (the "turnabout") associated with a decrease in knowledge. This contradicts the central thrust of the Gallup interpretation.

Consider next the October CBS (items 20a–b) and January NBC

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[9] Harris (1977:3) found 53%–26% opposition to the "pro-treaty statement" that "The Panama Canal is not as important as it was, since big supertankers and aircraft carriers can't go through it, so it is a mistake to make such a fight over our keeping control of it."

[10] In response to our query, the Gallup organization acquired these data from the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research and generously made them available to us.

(items 26a–b) polls. Both began with a Type IIa item and found strong opposition. CBS then asked if respondents would support the treaties if they felt the United States could "always send in troops to keep the canal open"; NBC asked if respondents would support treaties amended to give the United States the right to "intervene if the canal is threatened by attack." These produced the highest levels of support ever recorded.

There is nothing inherently wrong with these items. But the CBS News release (1977:3) links its question to the Carter–Torrijos Statement of Understanding and concludes that a "high proportion" of treaty opponents "could be turned into supporters" if convinced of the Statement's guarantees. The NBC News release (1978:1) specifically equates its question with the leadership amendments and concludes that "there seems to be widespread support" for the amended treaties. These interpretations are, at best, highly dubious. As noted above, the Statement and leadership amendments specifically *prohibit* "intervention of the United States in the internal affairs of Panama" and action against Panama's "territorial integrity." It is very difficult to reconcile the wording of the poll questions with these restrictions. The questions seem to describe the right of unilateral U.S. intervention sought (unsuccessfully) by treaty opponents, not, as asserted in the news releases, the right of mutual defense guaranteed by the Statement and leadership amendments. Because of this error, both releases appear to seriously exaggerate potential support for the treaties as modified by the leadership amendments.[11]

Consider last the March Harris poll (items 32a–d). Its first two questions found 49%–41% approval of the Senate's ratification of the first treaty (described as ensuring the neutrality of the Canal) but 60%–29% opposition to the second treaty (described as giving control of the Canal to Panama). It then informed respondents that the *second* treaty had been changed to give the United States defense and transit rights and found 72%–19% approval of the changes. Finally, respondents were asked if they favored the second treaty as changed. This item elicited 44%–39% support.

One problem with this poll is that the changes it describes (the leadership amendments) were made to the *first* treaty, not the second. But a more serious concern is the interpretation provided by the Harris news release. Under the headline "Second Panama Canal Treaty Has Support," it states (Harris, 1978:1):

> By a relatively narrow 44–39 percent, a plurality of the American people now favors the second Panama Canal treaty, scheduled

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[11] NBC's release on its February poll (item 31) exhibits similar problems but does not *explicitly* equate its question wording with the leadership amendments.

> to be voted on by the U.S. Senate during the last week of this month.
>
> This treaty gives control of the canal to Panama after the year 2000, with the provisions that in an emergency, U.S. military force will be allowed to defend the canal and U.S. warships will have priority in going through the canal. Without these provisions, Americans reject giving control of the canal to Panama by 60–29 percent.

This is simply wrong. The best estimate from this poll is that the American people opposed the second treaty by 60%–29%. The Harris interpretation would be reasonable only if the entire population had been informed by Harris interviewers of the supposed changes to the second treaty.

Evaluation of Reporting Practices

It seems likely that the diversity of poll questions, their pattern of flaws, misinterpretation of several key findings, and the anomalous Gallup series all contributed to the widespread misunderstanding of public opinion on the Panama Canal treaties. Another factor may have been the coverage of these polls in the national news media (i.e., those capable of reaching a substantial fraction of the American public or policy-making elite). Accordingly, this section evaluates all reports from the period 1975–1978 of relevant poll results in the *New York Times, Newsweek, Time,* and early evening commercial television news.[12]

The amount, style, and quality of coverage vary widely across the six media. Nine stories in the *New York Times,* all published between August 1977 and April 1978, include specific (i.e., quantified and attributed) results. These were drawn from six polls: May ORC (item 8); August Gallup (item 11); September AP (item 15); and October (items 20a–b), January (item 25), and April (items 34a–b) CBS/*New York Times.* With one spectacular exception, the coverage is generally detailed, factual, and accurate. Interpretation of the reversals of opinion generated by the October and April CBS questions is especially perceptive and restrained (see, e.g., *New York Times,* 1978:A1/10). The exception is a story by Terence Smith published just before the ratification debate, in which he reports (1978:4):

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[12] *New York Times* poll reports were identified through the *New York Times Index. Time* and *Newsweek* poll reports were identified by an exhaustive review of all of their Panama coverage. Television poll reports were identified through an exhaustive review of *Television News Index and Abstracts* abstracts of all Panama stories and studied through the use of videotapes provided by the Vanderbilt Television News Archive.

> Last May, according to public opinion surveys conducted for the White House by pollster Patrick Caddell, an overwhelming 87 percent opposed the treaties. Today, that figure has been reduced to 55 percent, according to White House sources.

As Roshco (1978:356–7) and Moffett (1985:117–8) have argued, the 87% figure is apparently a transposition of the May ORC (item 8) finding; the 55% figure may be from the October Caddell survey (item 18). Smith also cites a November 1 memorandum to the President in which Hamilton Jordan claims a 30–35 point rise in support.

Characterizations of public opinion abound in *Newsweek*'s coverage of the treaties, but only six stories, all published between September 1977 and March 1978, mention polls. And the only specific findings reported are for the August (item 11) and January (item 24) Gallup surveys. The 1977 stories all stress popular skepticism. The point is made most forcefully in an October article (*Newsweek,* 1977:48) on "serious opposition at the grass-roots level" which notes: "Polls indicate that something like 60 per cent of the U.S. citzenry is either flatly opposed or doubtful." But a January 2 lead quotes "Jerry Ford" to the effect that "public opinion is already shifting in favor" of the treaties (Alpern with Lindsay, 1978:19). Six weeks later there is speculation about a "remarkable turnabout," buttressed by the January Gallup finding that for the "first time" [*sic*] a plurality of Americans support the "amended" [*sic*] treaties (Steele et al., 1978:18). Finally, a March 1978 *Newsweek* article reviews the 10-month ratification effort, which had begun with "opinion polls [*sic*] showing only 16 [*sic*] per cent of the public behind it" and succeeded at least in part because of "a colossal public relations and persuasion campaign that swung public opinion to roughly an equal division on the treaties" (Boeth et al., 1978:42).

Eight stories published in *Time* between August 1977 and July 1978 mention polls, including specific results from four national surveys. Embedded in a context of openly pro-treaty reporting, this coverage tends to be both inaccurate and eisegetical. For example, an August article (*Time,* 1977a:28) notes the 78% to 14% [*sic*] opposition found by an ORC poll of "1100 [*sic*] Americans [*sic*]," but quickly adds: "Of course, these figures could change drastically now that a treaty is in sight." This prediction is confirmed three weeks later in a report of the August Gallup poll (item 11) which concludes (1977b:21) that "the figures represent an increase in support over earlier surveys." By February, the reader is informed in passing (1978a:19) that "polls show a majority of the public in favor." The pattern is completed in a March article which compares findings from the August (item 11) and January (item 24) Gallup surveys to show (1978b:9) "a turnabout for which the

Administration can claim substantial credit." But *Time,* alone among the media studied, followed public opinion after ratification. Thus its final word comes in a June story on the 1978 Yankelovich poll (item 37) which reports without comment (*Time,* 1978c:28) that respondents, by a 50%–33% margin, consider the treaties "a mistake."

Television coverage is similarly diverse. ABC does not appear to have reported any poll results in its early evening newscasts, relying instead on projected Senate vote tallies. On CBS, five stories mention specific findings. These include a reference (11 August 1977) by Senator Jesse Helms to the May ORC (item 8) results, a report (21 September) of the September AP (item 15) findings, a major story (1 November) on the October CBS (items 20a–b) poll, and two pieces (13 April 1978) on the April CBS (items 34a–b) survey. The reporting is generally factual and accurate, as with the *New York Times,* but less extensive. In particular, the results of the two CBS reversal questions (items 20b and 34b) are not mentioned explicitly, and no attempt is made to assess the trend of public opinion.

In contrast, NBC charts a clear reversal in public opinion. Early opposition to the treaties is established by brief descriptions (10 and 22 August and 21 September 1977) of the August NBC (item 10), May ORC (item 8), and September AP (item 15) findings. But an 11 January 1978 news analysis, while noting "public opinion polls have consistently shown a majority of the American people opposed" to the treaties, concludes with the assertion that "public opinion seems to be changing . . . so opponents of the treaty are worried." Two days later, a major story on Senate Majority Leader Robert Byrd's decision to suport the treaties if modified to clarify U.S. rights includes this discussion of NBC's January (items 26a–b) survey:[13]

> Senator Byrd's feeling that the Panama Canal treaties need some revision matches the feeling of the American public. . . .
>
> An NBC/Associated Press poll shows most Americans still against the Panama Canal treaties as they now stand. [Video: 'Yes 28%' over 'No 62%'] Only 28% say yes; 62% say no. But if the treaties were amended to give the United States the right to intervene against an outside threat, [video: 'Yes 65%' over 'No 28%'] 65% would say yes to ratification, 28% would say no. [Video: 'YES' in large letters] 'Yes' was the answer by most of the 1600 adults questioned this week by telephone, 'yes' with the intervention amendment as a condition to giving Panama the Canal in the year 2000.
>
> But if the treaties are actually amended as Senator Baker and others have demanded. . . .

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[13] See Smith and Hogan (1985:54–55) for a complete text of this story.

Aside from its emphasis, this story is interesting because it explicitly links public support for the right to intervene to Senators Byrd and Baker, soon to introduce the leadership amendments which specifically abjure that right. The NBC News attitude toward conservative amendments designed to secure a unilateral right of intervention is shown by its report of the February NBC (item 31) poll, delivered by David Brinkley on 28 February 1978:

> In the Senate today, opponents of the Panama Canal treaties lost another vote. Their strategy is to load down the treaties with so many amendments that nobody will vote for them. In another attempt at this today they lost, 69 to 24. A new NBC News/Associated Press poll shows public support for these treaties has declined a little in recent weeks, but a majority of 54% of the public still supports them.

Gone is any reference to the hypothetical right to "intervene" specified by the poll question, and an apparent net shift of 23 points (quite possibly the result of major changes in question wording) is dismissed as "little."

In general, CBS and the *New York Times* provided accurate and perceptive accounts of public opinion on the treaties. But the *Time, Newsweek,* and NBC stories, and the Smith article in the *Times,* display serious flaws. During the crucial period of Senate deliberation (January through April 1978) all claimed a massive shift in approval based on comparison of responses to different questions asked, in most cases, by different pollsters. Furthermore, the coverage is littered by errors of fact and inference and shows little understanding of the complex issues involved. In particular, any description of U.S. rights provided by a poll question, however extreme, is equated with the carefully qualified leadership amendments, and responses to such questions are invariably interpreted as showing the level of support for the amended treaties.

Equally disturbing are certain common omissions. After January 1978, most findings of continued public opposition were simply ignored. This is especially puzzling in the case of the February 1978 ORC poll (item 30). Although ambiguous if used to gauge support for the actual treaties, its findings of 72%–19% opposition to the concept of ceding the Canal might have served as a caution to facile claims of a "turnabout." But none of the six media ever mentioned it, although four had reported ORC's May 1977 results (item 8). Also omitted were the methodological details that would have allowed an educated reader or viewer to discover the misinterpretations embedded in the media coverage. Only two articles, both in the *New York Times,* provided the complete text of a question; only one, also in the *Times,* included all of the information required by the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) Standards of Disclosure for poll reports. In *Time* and *Newsweek* almost no information was given.

Conclusions

The 1977–1978 debate on the Panama Canal treaties should serve as a cautionary tale on the perils of opinion polling. At least four lessons can be learned from it. First, polling on Panama provides another in a long line of demonstrations (see, e.g., Rugg, 1941) of the great sensitivity of public opinion to even minor variations in question wording. Given the large number of pollsters and the tendency of the partisan and the naive to see illusory "trends" in responses to different questions, this problem can never be solved completely. But it could be minimized if pollsters were to make a greater effort to use series of *identical* questions to track opinion over time.

Second, it appears that many later questions were inadvertently biased by the attempt of pollsters to inform respondents about key provisions of the treaties. Such an attempt is reasonable only if one assumes public ignorance about those provisions. Although a constant refrain of many treaty supporters, the only proof of public ignorance comes from Gallup's flawed "knowledge" questions. Contrary evidence includes the extensive educational efforts of both treaty supporters and opponents and the poll findings. These reveal high issue awareness (81% in two polls), salience, and intensity, as well as greater political knowledgeability among the more than one-fifth of the public who were intensely opposed to the treaties (CBS News, 1977:3). But whatever the level of knowledge in this instance, the more important point is that *any* attempt to inform respondents on a topic is problematic. In addition to questions of bias raised by the provision of a selected body of information, it is impossible to be certain that the newly informed respondents are still representative of their population. If the primary task of polling is to discover what the public's views *are,* not what they *might become* given certain information, it is hard to justify this practice.

Third, the extended debate on the Panama Canal treaties centered in the end on subtle differences of interpretation of the nuances of meaning and implication of documents designed to bridge the competing interests of conflicting parties. But these complexities were not adequately addressed by polls on the topic. For example, the key issue was not whether the public would support treaties with strong defense guarantees but whether the leadership amendments provided them. Many asked the former question, none asked the latter. In short, complex and important issues of public policy can be illuminated only by polls which are commensurately subtle, specific, and extensive.

Finally, this study provides another example (cf. Smith and Verrall, 1985; Smith, 1986) of serious deficiencies in news reports of opinion polls. It is quite likely that these contributed to the confusion about public opinion on the treaties. Aside from elementary errors of interpretation, the most disturbing feature of this coverage is the universal practice of omitting the methodological details required by the reporting standards of AAPOR and other professional polling groups. It may be that these standards should be modified to meet the constraints of the broadcast media (Smith, 1984). Regardless, journalists must be brought to realize that unless a poll report includes the complete text of the question and precise information on interviewing dates and populations surveyed, it is *necessarily* unintelligible, inaccurate, or both (Smith, 1984:18–20).

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THE HOLLOW REALIGNMENT
PARTISAN CHANGE IN A CANDIDATE-CENTERED ERA

MARTIN P. WATTENBERG

Abstract In 1984 identification with the Republican party increased to the point where the plurality of Democrats over Republicans reached its lowest point since such measurements began in 1952. Yet the realignment is a hollow one between two parties who still have a weak image in the public mind and an uncertain role in the future of American government. While the balance of power between the two parties shifted, the importance of political parties to the electorate remained at an historically weak level. Split-ticket voting continued to be high and roughly a third of the electorate had nothing to say—either positive or negative—about both the parties. In short, realignment occurred in 1984 without party revitalization and the reestablishment of the linkage between parties and candidates.

As the 1984 election approached, there were ample signs that the long-awaited party revitalization and realignment might at last be under way. To some extent these expectations were realized; Republican identification grew in 1984 to the point where the plurality of Democrats over Republicans reached its lowest level since 1952, when such measurements began. Yet such a realignment is hollow when the two parties involved continue to have a weak image in the public mind and an uncertain role in the future of American government.

For over three decades prior to 1984 the American public had been drifting away from the two major parties. Once the central guiding forces in American electoral behavior, the parties had by 1980 come to be perceived with almost complete indifference by a large percentage of the population. The decline of public affection for the parties was not due to any greater negative feelings about the Democrats and Re-

MARTIN P. WATTENBERG is Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of California, Irvine. The data presented in this article are from the American National Election Studies: 1952–1984 and were provided by the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research.

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publicans but rather to an increasing sense that the parties just no longer matter much in the governmental process.

For example, over a third of those interviewed in the 1980 National Election Study exhibited the following response pattern to a series of four open-ended questions about the political parties:

Q: What do you like about the Democratic party? A: Nothing.
Q: What do you dislike about the Democratic party? A: Nothing.
Q: What do you like about the Republican party? A: Nothing.
Q: What do you dislike about the Republican party? A: Nothing.

When these questions were first asked in 1952, only 10% of the sample responded this way. In the 1950s such indifference usually proved to be part of a more general sense of political apathy and lack of political knowledge; by 1980 it was much more likely to be a specific indicator of apathy and lack of knowledge about the parties themselves.

It probably would have been better for the parties if the public had become more negative rather than more neutral toward them. Negative attitudes can easily be turned into positive attitudes by better performance or a change in policies. To make people care about political parties once again is a much more difficult task in the current candidate-centered mass media age. As this paper will argue, even an election with many signs of realignment was not sufficient to reverse the decline in salience of partisan attitudes in the electorate.

The Evidence for Realignment: Changing the Balance in Party Identification

Since the National Election Studies began in 1952, Democrats have consistently outnumbered Republicans by a ratio of approximately 1.7 to 1.0. As Table 1 shows, this ratio reached an all-time low in 1984, with Democrats outnumbering Republicans by less than 10% for the first time. If one includes the Independent leaners with the respective partisan groups, then the gap is cut even further, with 47.8% identifying with the Democrats, compared to 39.5% for the Republicans. Because Republicans turn out at higher rates than Democrats, this gap is still less among voting participants in 1984, with Democrats having only a 47.4 to 44.6 edge over the Republicans. For the Republican party this is the highest percentage while for the Democratic party it is the lowest ever. Furthermore, despite the increased size of the Republican identifiers, their cohesiveness as a voting bloc was also close to an all-time high in 1984. Only 5% of all Republicans defected in 1984—

Table I. Party Identification: 1952–1984

	1952	1956	1960	1964	1968	1972	1976	1980	1984
Democrats	47.2	43.6	45.3	51.7	45.4	40.4	39.7	40.8	37.0
Independents	22.6	23.4	22.8	22.8	29.1	34.7	36.1	34.5	34.2
Republicans	27.2	29.1	29.4	24.5	24.2	23.4	23.2	22.4	27.1
Apoliticals	3.1	3.8	2.5	0.9	1.4	1.4	0.9	2.2	1.7
Dem. plurality	20.0	14.5	15.9	27.2	21.2	17.0	16.5	18.4	9.9
Democrats plus Dem. leaners	56.8	49.9	51.6	61.0	55.2	51.5	51.5	52.3	47.8
Pure Indep.	5.8	8.8	9.8	7.8	10.5	13.1	14.6	12.9	11.0
Republicans plus Repub. leaners	34.3	37.4	36.1	30.2	32.9	33.9	32.9	32.6	39.5
Apoliticals	3.1	3.8	2.5	0.9	1.4	1.4	0.9	2.2	1.7
Dem. plurality	22.5	12.5	15.5	31.1	22.3	17.6	18.6	19.7	8.3

well below their average presidential defection rate of 12% for 1952–1980, and the lowest since the 4% rate in the 1956 election.

Assuming the Republicans can hold on to these gains, their presidential strategy should change significantly, turning away from the necessity of winning Democratic and Independent votes and more toward simply maintaining their own base. One possible implication of this is that with the partisan balance now being more equal the two competing parties may offer more distinct appeals to the populace on the presidential level. Since Reagan took over the Republican party leadership, the percentage of the electorate seeing important differences between what the two major parties stand for has grown from the stable 46% to 52% range it occupied during the 1952–1976 period to 58% in 1980 and 63% in 1984. This greater public perception of philosophical differences between the parties may well be one of the most long-lasting changes in the political system from the Reagan era.

Realignment in Electoral Coalitions: Changes in the Demographic Base of Party Support

Another aspect to examine in the search for evidence of realignment is changes in the social base of partisan support. It is generally acknowledged that the party coalitions have been gradually changing and that the New Deal coalition has slowly been withering away (see Petrocik, 1981). In 1984 speculations on the death of the New Deal coalition were widespread in the press. As William Schneider (1984) wrote shortly after the election:

> There have been marked changes in the nature of the Democratic vote. Compare, for example, the vote for Adlai E. Stevenson in 1956 with the vote for Mondale this year. Both Democratic candidates were Midwestern liberals, and both got about the same share of the popular vote (42% for Stevenson, 41% for Mondale). But the nature of their support was very different. Mondale did significantly better than Stevenson among black voters, college graduates, women and professionals. On the other hand, Stevenson's support was much stronger among whites, Southerners, blue-collar workers, union members and Catholics.

Table 2 employs Schneider's instructive idea of comparing the 1956 and 1984 voting patterns, and Table 3 takes it one step further by presenting 1956 and 1984 data on party identification for the various groups in question. From the latter one can see some definite elements of change in the party coalitions, but not to the degree the death notices of the New Deal coalition might lead us to expect.

Table 2. Electoral Coalitions: 1956 and 1984 Compared[a]

	1956	1984		1956	1984
REGION (computed from returns)			INCOME PERCENTILE		
Northeast	60.7	55.1	0–10	59	32
Midwest	58.7	58.4	11–30	56	43
South	51.5	62.0	31–60	58	57
Mountain	60.4	66.9	61–90	57	64
Pacific	55.3	57.7	91–100	75	75
RELIGION			RACE		
White Protestant	66	72	White	61	63
Catholic	54	54	Black	36	9
Jewish	22	31			
			SEX		
AGE			Male	56	63
Under 30	58	57	Female	63	55
30–59	59	59			
Over 60	60	57	UNION		
			Union	48	43
			Nonunion	64	63

[a] Figures are percentages of Republican vote.

For example, across religious groups there is relatively little indication of change. There is some increase in Republican voting among white Protestants, but this has been counteracted by the greater Democratic vote of black Protestants, 90% of whom have voted for the Democrats ever since 1964. Contrary to what Schneider writes, Catholics continued to support the Democrats at above the national average, with Mondale's vote among Catholics exactly matching Stevenson's in 1956. On party identification one finds that both white Protestants and Catholics have moved toward more Republican identification but that the partisan gap between the two religious groups remains just as it was in 1956. And as for Jews, they continued in 1984 to be the only major white ethnic group to vote more Democratic than Republican. Although the 31% Republican vote among Jews is substantially higher than the comparable 22% figure in 1956, it should be noted that 1956 was a historical low point as a result of negative Jewish reaction to Eisenhower's handling of the Suez crisis, and that party identification among Jews still remains overwhelmingly Democratic. Furthermore, Jews were also the only demographic group to support Reagan by less in 1984 than in 1980, having given him 36% of their votes in 1980.

Table 3. Party Coalitions: 1956 and 1984 Compared[a]

	1956	1984		1956	1984
REGION			INCOME PERCENTILE		
Northeast	−9	+9	0–10	+18	+36
Midwest	−1	+1	11–30	+22	+29
South	+45	+14	31–60	+17	+6
Mountain	+31	−7	61–90	+13	0
Pacific	+21	+7	91–100	−22	−33
RELIGION			RACE		
White Protestant	+1	−14	White	+10	0
Catholic	+33	+23	Black	+34	+72
Jewish	+55	+42			
AGE			SEX		
Under 30	+19	+4	Male	+20	0
30–59	+15	+8	Female	+7	+13
Over 60	0	+9			
			UNION		
			Union	+30	+27
			Nonunion	+7	+2

Note: The 1984 figures combine the traditional pre–post dataset with the continuous monitoring study for 1984 in order to increase the sample size of the various groups. Because of differences in coding procedures this was not possible for income, however.

[a] Figures are percentage of Democrats minus percentage of Republicans (including Independent leaners).

Another change in the New Deal coalition that Schneider would lead us to expect concerns the union vote. Table 2, however, shows that union members were actually more supportive of Mondale than of Stevenson. The AFL-CIO's early endorsement of Mondale during the presidential primaries and Mondale's long history of support for organized labor apparently blunted any change in the union vote in 1984. In addition, Table 3 shows that the cleavage between union and nonunion voters on party identification remains intact; the Democratic party has suffered losses from the decline in union membership—not from any movement by union members toward Republican identification.

Perhaps most importantly lacking in the demographic evidence for realignment is any indication of unusual support for the Republicans among young voters. Much of the evidence concerning past realignments argues that little change results from people switching parties, but rather that realignment occurs as a result of an influx of new voters who dramatically shift the partisan balance of power. Commercial polls throughout most of the campaign showed Reagan ahead by a wide margin among voters under thirty, leading many in the press to speculate that realignment had arrived. By election day this edge for the Republicans apparently evaporated. As Table 2 shows, each category voted virtually the same in 1984—just as it was in 1956.

In contrast, there has been a change in the pattern of party identification by age. In the 1950s those over sixty were clearly the most Republican age group in terms of party identification. As a result, the process of generational replacement favored the Democrats for years as a simple consequence of the fact that the people who were leaving the electorate were primarily those socialized during the pre–New Deal period. This Democratic advantage has now apparently run its course.

All of this is not to say that there has been no shift in the party coalitions, but rather that the degree of change has often been overestimated. As for major changes. Tables 2 and 3 demonstrate partisan shifts along the lines of gender, income, and region. The much-heralded gender gap of the 1980s seems somewhat less striking when compared to similar figures for 1956, however. Seen in this perspective the fact that women are voting differently than men is nothing new; what is of interest is that the voting pattern has changed from women being more supportive of Eisenhower to being less supportive of Reagan, and that this is also reflected in the data on party identification.

Turning to the relationship between family income and party identification and the vote, the data point to a resurgence of a cleavage that sharply divided Democrats from Republicans during the New Deal. By 1956 this relationship had dissolved to the point where income made virtually no difference in either the vote or party identification, the only exception being that people in the top 10% in earnings were notably more Republican.[1] In contrast, the .22 correlation between income and the presidential vote in 1984 represents a high point in the election study time series. Should this relationship continue to be strong (and the data on party identification in Table 3 indicates that it probably will), there will be further reason to expect the parties to remain more clearly different than they have been in the past. Having constituencies that differ substantially in terms of income should make for more relatively distinct economic programs.

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[1] One might think that the Southern democratic vote might obscure the relationship between income and the vote, but controlling for region with the 1956 data makes no difference in this whatsoever.

Finally, the most important transformation in party coalitions has undoubtedly been the change in the regional distribution of the vote. As Schneider points out, the once solid Democratic South is no longer solid at all. Southerners in fact voted at a higher rate for Reagan in 1984 (62%) than the national average. In terms of party identification, the South still remains the most Democratic of all regions, but the decline in the number of Southern Democrats as shown in Table 3 is nevertheless quite steep and significant.

Another important regional change that has largely escaped academic notice to date is the growth of the Republicans in the Mountain West (see Wattenberg and Miller, 1981). Once the most Democratic region of the country second only to the South, over the last several elections the Mountain West has given more of its votes to the Republicans than any other region. Furthermore, party identification figures since 1972 have consistently shown the Republicans to be the majority party of the region. Although the population of the Mountain West casts only about 5% of the presidential vote, its representation in the U.S. Senate is 16%. This advantage for the Republicans plus their increasing ability to win Senate races in the South surely facilitated their takeover of the Senate in 1980 and the subsequent maintenance of the Republican Senate majority.

On the presidential level, the changes in the regional distribution of the vote have resulted in a complete turnaround concerning which party has the most solid base of support in the electoral college. As the result of the Republican gains in the South and Mountain West there are now fifteen states—representing 112 electoral votes—which have voted over 5 percentage points more Republican than the national average in presidential elections since 1964.[2] In comparison, there are only four states—totaling 33 electoral votes—in which the vote has been more than 5% more Democratic than the national average.[3] Of course, this still does not make the Republicans the majority party. What this distribution of votes within the states does give them, though, is a head start in presidential elections.

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[2] These Republican states and their deviation from the average Republican presidential vote from 1964 to 1984 are: Mississippi (+13.8), Idaho (+12.9), Utah (+12.7), Nebraska (+11.0), Arizona (+9.4), Wyoming (+9.1), Oklahoma (+7.9), Kansas (+7.3), Florida (+6.4), Louisiana (+6.3), North Dakota (+5.9), South Carolina (+5.8), Nevada (+5.7), Virginia (+5.3), and Alabama (+5.1).

[3] These Democratic states and their deviation from the average Democratic presidential vote from 1964 to 1984 are: Rhode Island (+11.6), Massachusetts (+11.0), Minnesota (+7.0), and West Virginia (+5.5).

Split-Ticket Voting in 1984

Although the Republicans may now start each presidential election with an advantage in the electoral college, they still are significantly handicapped in House elections because of the Democrats' incumbency advantage. As Schneider (1984) writes, "If the government had passed a decree prohibiting incumbents from running for reelection, the Republican party would probably have gained control of the House in 1984." With the advantage of incumbency, House Democrats were largely able to withstand the Reagan landslide, losing only fourteen seats. In 44% of all the congressional districts the party that won the presidential race lost in the congressional contest. This matches the historical high for this measure set in 1972 when Nixon won a large victory but the Republicans captured only twelve additional House seats.

Such aggregate figures, although instructive as broad indicators of systemic results, can sometimes be misleading as measures of individual level behavior. From Table 4 it can be seen that although partisan behavior did not decline in 1984, it was not substantially revitalized either. Clearly, party identification was a more meaningful predictor of the presidential vote, as the percentage casting party-line votes reached a new high of 80%. As would be expected from the aggregate figures, however, this greater partisan behavior did *not* extend to the congressional level. In the case of both House and Senate elections, party-line voting increased only 1% and thus continued to be well below the comparable figures from the period between 1952 and 1964.

Similarly, in 1984 split-ticket voting remained quite high by historical standards, although down somewhat from the levels of 1980. In the case of ticket splitting between President and House one should not

Table 4. Trends in Party-Line and Split-Ticket Voting: 1952–1984

	1952	1956	1960	1964	1968	1972	1976	1980	1984
Party-line voting									
House	80	82	80	79	74	75	72	69	70
Senate	79	80	79	79	73	69	69	71	72
President	77	76	79	79	69	67	74	68	80
Split-ticket voting									
Pres–House	12	16	14	15	26	30	25	34	25
Senate–House	9	10	9	18	22	23	23	31	20
Local	27	30	27	41	48	56	NA	59	52

make too much of the decrease, given that the 1980 figure is inflated by the Anderson vote. Also, the record high for ticket splitting between Senate and House voting in 1980 now appears to be a blip in the time series due to the abnormal number of strong Senate challengers that year. With these factors properly taken into account, it thus seems that split-ticket voting remains at alarmingly high levels for the future of political parties.

In summary, despite the increase in Republican identification in 1984, it appears from these data that the Reagan victory was just as the aggregate figures imply—a personal one based on his performance in office rather than a widespread party victory on the basis of Republican policy stands.

Policy and Performance Voting in the 1984 Presidential Race

A common theme in the press coverage of the 1984 election was that people liked Reagan but not his policies. Such a pattern of voting behavior seems unlikely given the tendency toward cognitive consistency that generally takes place during any decision-making process. At the very least one would expect voters to conform their perceptions of the candidates' policy stands to their vote choice. In an age of electoral disaggregation, however, where the focus of attention is on the candidates' performance rather than their party's promises, this kind of rationalization may no longer be necessary. Why worry too much about Reagan's policies if one is voting just for Reagan and not for an entire partisan team to accomplish the proposed policies?

Table 5 presents some crucial data on presidential approval and policy proximities for 1984, which is evidence of just such a phenomenon. As best as possible with the available data, I have essentially replicated the model of policy versus performance voting that Arthur Miller and I used to analyze the 1980 election (see Miller and Wattenberg, 1981). For 1980 we argued that although Reagan had the advantage of being close to more people on policy questions than Carter, this proximity was of far less importance than Carter's low performance ratings on matters such as inflation, unemployment, and Iran. Because both the policy and performance marginals seemed to favor Reagan, the argument was largely dependent on the regression equation results displayed in Table 5, showing that performance considerations far outweighed policy ones in the voting calculus.

The 1984 data indicate that although Reagan had the advantage of high approval ratings, on the major policy questions more people felt closer to Mondale's position. By fairly substantial margins those with

Table 5. A Model of the Vote Decision: 1980 and 1984

	1980		1984
Presidential approval[a]			
Overall	39	Overall	58
Inflation	21	Economy	54
Unemployment	26	Budget	33
Iran	32	Foreign policy	48
Afghanistan	48		
Energy	35		
Policy proximities[b]			
Ideology	−3		+1
Govt. spending	+7		−3
Defense spending	+23		−16
Get along with Russia	+17		−2
Govt. guaranteed jobs	+16		+3
Help minorities	+22		−3
Tax cut	+7		—
Central America	—		−23
Govt. help women	—		−2
Regression results[c]			
Presidential approval	.39		.48
Party identification	.36		.32
Ideology	.03		.04
Economic policies	.14		.07
Foreign policies	.05		.03
Minority aid policies	.05		.04
Social issues	.02		.01
Multiple R	.77		.82
(*N*)	(873)		(1058)

[a] Figures are percent approving of the incumbent president's performance.
[b] Entries are percent closer to Reagan minus percent closer to Carter/Mondale.
[c] Regression entries are standardized coefficients predicting the two-party vote.

opinions disagreed with Reagan's willingness to commit military help to Central America and his desire to spend more on defense. And by somewhat smaller margins, people saw Reagan as wanting to cut government services too deeply, not providing enough government aid to minorities and women, and being too tough with the Soviet Union.[4]

Given this pattern of Reagan being favored on performance but not on policies in 1984, it should not be surprising to find that the regression model shows that presidential approval ratings were far more important than voters' policy stands, and that the gap between the two was even greater than in 1980. When the four policy indices are combined into one and the model reestimated, the beta weight for performance is over four times greater than the coefficient for policy stands (.48 compared to .11).

Contrary to most theories of party realignment, it seems clear that the partisan change that occurred in 1984 can be traced not to any shift in policy cleavages but rather to presidential performance. Therefore, it is to be expected that the Republican gains in identification did not benefit the party in voting below the presidential level, as demonstrated above.

This is not to say that even if there had been a mandate for Reagan's policies the realignment would necessarily have been a truly meaningful one, extending beyond the presidency. As I wrote before the 1984 election, realignment depends on the voters translating their likes and dislikes about the candidates and the candidates' stands on specific issues into likes and dislikes about the parties (see Wattenberg, 1984:88–89). The link in the public mind between presidential candidates and their parties has been increasingly weakened, and the data for 1984 fail to show any signs of revitalization in this crucial respect.

Party and Candidate Images in 1984

Since 1952 every presidential election study has asked respondents what they like and dislike about each of the two major parties. By counting the number of likes and subtracting the number of dislikes, one can determine whether a respondent is negative, neutral, or positive toward each party with these data. Table 6 presents this information about each party for 1952 to 1984 as well as for both parties combined. While the Republican image has become notably more positive since 1976, the major finding is that both parties are seen neutrally by nearly half of the population—virtually double the comparable

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[4] Unfortunately the CPS survey failed to ask a question about what probably was Reagan's best issue in 1984—the proposed tax increase.

Table 6. Attitudes Toward the Parties: 1952–1984

BOTH PARTIES COMBINED	Negative Negative	Negative Neutral	Neutral Neutral	Positive Negative	Positive Neutral	Positive Positive
1952	3.6	9.7	13.0	50.1	18.1	5.5
1956	2.9	9.0	15.9	40.0	23.3	8.9
1960	1.9	7.5	16.8	41.4	24.2	8.3
1964	4.4	11.2	20.2	38.4	20.6	5.0
1968	10.0	13.8	17.3	37.5	17.4	4.1
1972	7.9	12.6	29.9	30.3	14.7	4.7
1976	7.5	11.8	31.3	31.1	13.7	4.5
1980	5.0	8.6	36.5	27.3	17.7	4.8
1984	3.0	7.7	35.8	31.3	18.0	4.1

REPUBLICAN PARTY	Negative	Neutral	Positive
1952	35.0	28.2	36.8
1956	30.5	34.2	35.3
1960	29.6	35.5	34.9
1964	35.4	40.9	23.7
1968	32.6	37.1	30.3
1972	31.8	44.6	23.6
1976	34.8	45.9	19.3
1980	24.8	52.1	23.1
1984	26.1	48.7	25.2

DEMOCRATIC PARTY	Negative	Neutral	Positive
1952	32.3	25.3	42.4
1956	24.2	30.0	45.8
1960	22.2	31.5	46.3
1964	23.0	31.4	45.6
1968	38.6	28.6	32.8
1972	26.9	42.4	30.7
1976	23.3	42.2	34.5
1980	21.1	47.3	31.6
1984	18.8	48.8	32.4

figures for 1952. Combining attitudes toward both parties, the data indicate that the steady growth in the neutral–neutral category was arrested in 1984, but nevertheless partisan neutrality remains at an alarmingly high level for the future of party government.

Thus, despite the signs of realignment, partisan attitudes in the electorate were not revitalized. For both Democrats and Republicans the decline has meant that the public sees them less positively as well as less negatively. Of course both parties should clearly be concerned about inducing the public to view them more favorably, but their first concern should be simply to motivate the public to think more about them. As noted at the outset of this article, over a third of the population had nothing to say about either of the two parties in 1980, and this continued to be true in 1984. By comparison, less than 10% of those interviewed in 1984 had nothing to say to the candidate like–dislike questions.

This growing predominance of candidates over parties can be illustrated by comparing the images of the parties and candidates in 1984 to those of 1956. Examining these open-ended questions by various content dimensions, one finds a variety of images that are becoming more candidate- and less party-centered. One of the most salient images of the parties in the past, for example, has been the perceptions of which socioeconomic and ethnic groups they are for or against. In 1984, however, only 34.0% said something about group benefits in answer to the questions about the parties compared to 43.6% in 1956. By contrast, the figures for the candidate questions on this dimension are 29.4% for 1984 compared to just 16.2% in 1956. Examining the entire 1952–1984 time series reveals that the salience of group benefits in candidate evaluations reached an all-time high in 1984 while for party evaluations the frequency of comments about group benefits fell to a new low.

Another crucial issue affecting the parties' images and stemming from New Deal attitudes is the economic and welfare stands of the Democrats and Republicans. The Democrats were widely supported on such issues in 1956 even though a landslide Republican election occurred that year; by 1984 this was no longer the case. Most important to note is how little *candidate* evaluations centered around such issues in 1956 compared to 1984. Only 4.2% said they liked Eisenhower because of his economic/welfare positions, and only 2.4% expressed dislike of him on this dimension. By 1984 these issues had become primarily candidate-centered, with the comparable figures for Reagan being 27.5% and 23.7%, respectively. As I have noted previously (Wattenberg, 1984:129), the fact that the economic program of the current administration is popularly known as "Reaganomics" rather than "Republican economics" is indicative of how the public views it, i.e., in candidate-centered, rather than partisan, terms. Indeed, when people were asked whether the national economy had either improved or worsened and why they thought this was the case, 21.1% explicitly said the President was responsible compared to only 0.5% who named one of the parties, 2.8% who mentioned the government in general, and 0.2% who credited or blamed Congress.

On foreign policy issues a similar pattern of change toward candidate-centered images can be found. Given that the President has always had greater power in foreign affairs than in domestic affairs, it should not be surprising that even in 1956 candidates were more frequently associated with foreign policy issues than the parties were. Since then this association with candidates has strengthened even further. From 1956 to 1984 the percentage of respondents mentioning foreign policy in response to one or more of the candidate questions increased from 28.0% to 42.5%, whereas for the party questions the proportion fell from 23.3% to 18.4%. No doubt the most striking difference between the foreign policy images for 1956 as compared to 1984 is that the net partisan result one gets from combining the positive and negative comments is no longer a parallel one between parties and candidates. In 1956 both Eisenhower and the Republican party had a very positive image on foreign policy, while both Stevenson and the Democratic party had a very negative one. By comparison, Reagan's image on this dimension was somewhat negative compared to the slightly positive image the Republicans enjoyed; and Mondale was seen more positively than negatively in this regard, while public judgment of the Democrats was just the opposite.

This disassociation of party from candidate is symptomatic of the major problem facing the political parties today. Perhaps the clearest sort of evidence for this disassociation can be seen in the spontaneous mention of political leaders with respect to the party like–dislike questions. In 1956, 34.4% of those interviewed mentioned a party leader in response to one or more of the questions about the parties; in 1984 this figure was only 14.7%. The most important specific comparison is that of Reagan and Eisenhower as standard-bearers of the Republican party. Despite the fact that Eisenhower was a much less partisan figure than Reagan, 15.3% nevertheless said they liked the Republicans because of him in 1956 compared to only 3.4% with regard to Reagan in 1984.

In summary, party revitalization did not occur in 1984 because the candidate–party link was not reestablished. The situation remains one in which the parties need people to make the connection between them and the candidates before they can regain the level of prominence they formerly held in the public mind.

Conclusion

Given the continuing weakness of the public image of both parties, one must question whether the change in party identification in favor of the Republicans has substantive meaning. One possible explanation for this shift is that partisanship has now become so weak that people are shifting it with their presidential vote. If party identification has become nothing more than an indicator of short-term presidential preference, this would explain why party-line voting increased on the presidential, but not the congressional, level. Although this is a plausible hypothesis, it seems unlikely given that the same circumstances of weak partisanship and a Republican landslide occurred in both 1972 and 1980 without affecting the distribution of party identification at all.

What made the 1984 election different in my view was the clear contrast between the performance of the incumbent Republican administration and the Democratic administration it replaced. For once the choice was not between the present and an uncertain alternative future. Rather, the Reagan–Mondale contest was one between the recent past and a present which had seen major changes. Such a choice was conducive not only to vote switching but to partisan switching as well. Until the Democrats return to office and prove that they can do something different, I believe it is doubtful that these shifts will be substantially reversed.

Should the Republican gains in party identification in 1984 prove to be in fact realigning, this would raise serious questions about how realignments occur. Most previous research looks upon realignment as a decision of the electorate which directly guides the functioning of government. Yet the evidence for a policy mandate in 1984 seems as weak as it has ever been. If anything, there was a reverse policy mandate, with people voting for Reagan in spite of his policies rather than for them. It was performance evaluations that truly mattered in 1984, and it may well be that this rather than policies is the key to realignment.

Yet, even if the Republican surge is a long-lasting one, it will be of limited importance as long as partisan attitudes in the electorate continues to decline. Given the most ideal conditions for party revitalization in decades, all that occurred was a stabilization of the decline. With an incumbent unable to run again, and with what will most likely be fractious campaigns for the presidential nomination within both parties, it seems likely that the conditions in 1988 will be such as to foster further party decline. The candidate-centered age will be with us for a long time to come, regardless of whether the next political era will be a Democratic or Republican one.

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PUBLIC ATTITUDES TOWARD SUICIDE

DEMOGRAPHIC AND IDEOLOGICAL CORRELATES

DARWIN SAWYER AND
JEFFERY SOBAL

Abstract Despite long-standing research interest in the social correlates of suicide, public attitudes toward suicide have received comparatively little attention. Using data from NORC's General Social Survey, this study examines popular support for a person's right to commit suicide when s/he is tired of living or faced with an incurable disease, bankruptcy, or family dishonor. Survey responses to these four items conform to a unidimensional Guttman-type scale. Opposition to suicide, as measured by this scale, varies along a number of sociodemographic lines. Prolife beliefs and civil libertarianism are strongly related to a person's attitudes toward suicide and explain at least part of every sociodemographic relationship examined. By contrast, life satisfaction, anomia, and social participation measures show no significant associations with suicide attitudes.

Suicide, as a social phenomenon, has gained increased notoriety in recent years with widely publicized accounts of the "suicide crisis" among America's teens and heightened concern over "right-to-die" issues in the United States as well as abroad. The seeming failure to reach consensus on proposed strategies of intervention reflects the highly variegated nature of the suicide problem and the growing ambivalence about what has traditionally been portrayed as a socially

DARWIN SAWYER is Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Maryland Baltimore County. JEFFERY SOBAL is Assistant Professor in the Department of Family Medicine at the University of Maryland School of Medicine in Baltimore. Earlier versions of this paper were presented at the 1985 annual meetings of the American Sociological Association and the American Association for Public Opinion Research. The authors wish to thank the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research for making the data for this study available. The data for the Spring 1982 General Social Survey, National Data Program for the Social Sciences, were originally collected by James A. Davis and Tom W. Smith of the National Opinion Research Center.

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deviant act. Interest in the normative bases of suicidal behavior dates at least as far back as Durkheim (1951), yet except for a handful of widely scattered and narrowly focused studies (Ansel and McGee, 1971; Domino, Gibson, Polling, and Westlake, 1980; Domino, Cohen, and Gonzalez, 1981; Domino, Moore, Westlake, and Gibson, 1982; Ginsburg, 1971; Hood, 1973; Kalish, 1963; Kalish, Reynolds, and Farberow, 1974; Shneidman, 1971), little evidence has been produced to support this popular conception of public attitudes toward suicide. Even less evidence is available showing whether such attitudes vary within the population, and if so, why.

While opinion polls continue to show substantial public disapproval (Gallup, 1978), survey studies were reporting significant support for the rights of suicide victims as early as 1970 (Beswick, 1970).[1] In a more recent survey (Domino et al., 1980), 12% of the respondents felt that society had no right to interfere with the wishes of suicide victims. Approval levels as high as 48% have been found in cases of terminal illness (NORC, 1983), and while clearly a less compelling justification, fully 20% of the population approves of suicide even when one is simply a burden on his or her family (Gallup, 1978).

Methods

The present article examines the sociodemographic bases and ideological rationale behind these survey findings. Our data are taken from the National Opinion Research Center's (NORC) 1982 national probability sample of the noninstitutionalized U.S. population 18 years and older in March or April of that year (NORC, 1983). The 1982 General Social Survey (GSS) asked respondents four questions regarding a person's "right" to take his/her own life. Of the 1380 respondents answering all four questions (91.6% of the total sample of 1506), 45.9% approved of suicide in the case of "an INCURABLE disease," 14.3% when the person is "tired of living and READY to die," 8.9% when the person has "DISHONORED his/her family," and 8.5% when he/she has "gone BANKRUPT."[2]

We began by Guttman-analyzing survey responses to these four items to verify that they formed a single underlying dimension.[3] A 5-point (0 to 4) composite index of attitude intensity was subsequently constructed by summing the number of items each respondent opposed (0 for those who uniformly approved and 4 for those who uniformly opposed suicide in all four situations). Next, we intercorrelated this index with 15 sociodemographic characteristics (see Table 1) to determine whether, and if so how, suicide attitudes vary within the population. Finally, we reanalyzed each of these correlations to determine whether the attitude differences we discovered could be "explained" by a respondent's (1) "dissatisfaction with life," which should lead to greater empathy with and thus tolerance for suicide victims; (2) "anomia," which should produce similar reactions among those who experience a lack of purpose in their own lives; (3) "civil libertarianism," which should translate into greater support for the victim's individual autonomy and self-determination; (4) "prolife" values, since suicide, like abortion, can be seen to violate the moral-religious sanctity of human life; and (5) "social participation," which might serve to lessen group pressures to conform to moral-religious prohibitions of this kind. The results of the latter analysis are contained in Table 2.[4]

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[1] One in 10 people were found to regard suicide as an acceptable solution to life's problems in Beswick's (1970) study.

[2] Except for the case of "incurable diseases," approval rates have not changed significantly since the Suicide battery first appeared in the 1977 GSS. The respective percentages approving in 1977 and 1982 were 7% versus 8% for BANKRUPT, 8% versus 9% for DISHONOR, 13% versus 14% for READY, and 38% versus 45% for INCURABLE. The latest GSS approval ratings for 1985 (8% for BANKRUPT and DISHONOR, 13% for READY, and 46% for INCURABLE) show no additional changes of any significance (NORC, 1985).

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3. The results of that analysis included a coefficient of reproducibility of .99 and a coefficient of scalability of .93. Both figures are impressive by conventional standards and strongly indicate a cumulative and unidimensional Guttman-type scale (Clogg and Sawyer, 1982; Nie, 1975). Additional evidence of convergent validity was provided by the high intercorrelations (Yule's Q) found among the four items, which ranged from a low of .89 (between INCURABLE and READY) to a high of .99 (between BANKRUPT and DISHONOR, BANKRUPT and READY, and DISHONOR and READY), for an average association of .96. A latent structure analysis offered still further support for the unidimensionality of the four suicide items. For further details, contact the authors.

4. "Life satisfaction" is measured using a 6-point composite index based upon standard NORC indicators of respondent satisfaction with residence, hobbies, family life, friendships, and health (Campbell, 1981; Campbell, Converse, and Rodgers, 1976). "Prolife support" is measured using an 8-point index formed by summing positive responses to NORC questions regarding the propriety of legal abortion in cases of rape, unmarried mothers, defective fetuses, poverty, a desire for no more children, and other reasons (Clogg and Sawyer, 1981; Granberg, 1978). "Civil libertarianism" is measured using a 5-point index formed by summing prolibertarian responses to NORC survey questions regarding the free-speech rights of atheists, racists, communists, militarists, and homosexuals (Erskine and Siegel, 1975; Stinchcombe et al., 1980). "Anomia" is measured on a 3-point summated scale indicating a respondent's agreement that (a) "the lot of the average man is getting worse," (b) "it's hardly fair to bring a child into the world . . . ," and (c) "most public officials are not really interested in the problems of the average man." Finally "social participation" is measured with a 5-point index indicating the frequency with which a respondent interacts (a) with relatives, (b) with neighbors, (c) with friends, and (d) in a bar or tavern. Interested readers may contact the authors for further details regarding the construction of these indexes.

Table 1. Sociodemographic Differences in Suicide Attitudes, 1982

Variable/ (Predic. Power)	Most Opposed	Least Opposed	Percent Difference	Relationship	
				Unadjusted (eta)	Adjusted (beta)
Demographics					
Age (5)	Over 65	30–39	19.0%	.18***	.13***
Race (14)	Nonwhites	Whites	8.8	.08**	.06*
Sex (15)	Women	Men	5.4	.07**	.01
Marital (12)	Widowed	Never marr	20.5	.15***	.09*
Residence					
City size (13)	Rural	Urban	12.8	.14***	.08**
Region (5)	ESC	Pacific	35.0	.18***	.13***
SES					
Work status (5)	Retired	In school	19.2	.18***	.10
Education (3)	Elem	College +	27.3	.25***	.18***
Prestige (8)	Low	High	48.2	.17***	.15***
Income (8)	Under $6000	$25000 +	19.1	.17***	.08
Politics					
Party ID (10)	Strong Demo	Weak Demo	19.2	.16***	.11*
Pol views (10)	Conserv	Extreme lib	33.7	.16***	.10*
Religion					
Affiliation (2)	Protestant	Jewish	50.9	.27***	.16***
Attendance (1)	Weekly +	Never	38.7	.31***	.19***
Intensity (4)	Strong	Not strong	36.3	.23***	.12**

SOURCE: National Opinion Research Center (1983).
* = .05 level; ** = .01 level; *** = .001 level: *F*-test.

Table 2. Background Differences in Suicide Attitudes Adjusted for Civil Libertarianism and Prolife Support, 1982

		Percent Reduction in Unadjusted Difference Due to:		
Variable	Unadjusted Difference	Civil Libertarianism	Prolife Support	Both Variables
Demographics				
Age	.57***	82.5***	47.4***	86.0
Race	.28**	32.1	32.1*	53.6
Sex	.17**	47.1	11.8*	47.1
Marital status	.61***	60.7**	39.3**	54.1**
Residence				
City size	.39***	46.2*	46.2*	71.7
Region	.57***	19.3***	40.4	43.9
SES				
Work status	.56***	60.7	12.5*	33.9
Education	.78***	62.8***	41.0***	85.9*
Prestige	1.10***	39.1**	1.8***	28.2***
Income	.58***	60.3	44.8*	74.1
Politics				
Party ID	.57***	35.1	31.6**	50.9
Political views	.85***	35.3*	36.5**	28.2*
Religion				
Affiliation	1.13***	−1.8***	32.7***	23.0***
Attendance	1.04***	11.5***	38.5***	43.2***
Intensity	.50***	26.0***	72.0***	72.0

SOURCE: National Opinion Research Center (1983).

* = .05; ** = .01; *** .001: *F*-test. Statistical significance of the difference in suicide attitudes remaining after adjusting for the test variable(s).

Results

DEMOGRAPHIC CORRELATES

Table 1 summarizes our results for the fifteen sociodemographic correlates. The first column identifies each correlate and ranks (in parentheses) it in terms of its strength of association with the 5-point suicide index. Columns two and three indicate which subgroups show the greatest and least opposition to suicide. The fourth column shows the percentage difference in opposition levels between each pair of subgroups. (Thus, for example, the difference in opposition between 30- to

39-year-olds and those over 65 is (3.57 − 3.00) / 3.00, or 19%.) The last two columns show the strength of association (as measured by eta for zero-order relationships and beta for partial relationships) and significance level for each relationship when each correlate is considered alone (unadjusted column) and after it is adjusted for other sociodemographic correlates (adjusted column).

To summarize, women are more opposed to suicide than men, as are nonwhites, widow/ers, and the elderly; gender (eta = .07) and race (eta = .08), however, are weakly correlated at best. Rural residents and those living in the South Central and South Atlantic states also show greater opposition than respondents residing in other areas. Among socioeconomic characteristics, housekeepers and retirees are the most opposed (with respect to employment status), along with poorly educated, low income, and low status respondents. Along with those who describe their political views as "conservative," "strong" Democrats are less tolerant of suicide than any other political group. Finally, suicide is more strongly proscribed by Protestants, Catholics, frequent church attenders, and those with strong religious preferences.

MEDIATING INFLUENCES

Of the five mediating influences considered in our analysis, neither life satisfaction (eta = .06) nor anomia (eta = .05) is statistically associated (at the .05 level) with suicide attitudes, and the effect of social participation (eta = .10, $p < .05$), which was small to begin with, completely disappears after controlling for sociodemographic differences. Table 2 shows the effects of controlling for civil libertarianism (eta = .33; $p < .001$) and prolife support (eta = .43, $p < .001$), both of which were found to be strongly associated with the 5-point suicide index.

As before, the original association of each sociodemographic correlate is expressed in terms of the "unadjusted" difference in subgroup means between each pair of extreme categories. Thus, for example, the original difference between 30- to 39year-olds and those over 65 is 3.57 − 3.00 = 0.57, or 19%, as shown in Table 1, which is statistically significant at the .001 level. This unadjusted difference is then compared with the difference in subgroup means that remains after controlling first for each attitudinal correlate considered by itself and then in conjunction with the others. Thus, to continue the previous example, controlling for civil libertarianism reduces the unadjusted difference between 30- to 39-year-olds and those over 65 by 82.5%, from 0.57 to 0.10 (the latter of which is not statistically significant at the .05 level), while controlling for prolife support produces a 47.4% reduction. Together, the two factors reduce the original difference by fully 86%.

Except for racial differences, civil libertarianism (C-L) does a much-better job of explaining *demographic variations* in suicide attitudes than does prolife support (P-S). In addition to the 83% reduction in age differences already noted, controlling for C-L reduces gender differences by 47% (versus 12% for P-S) and marital status differences (between widow/ers and never marrieds) by 61% (versus 39% for P-S). On the basis of these findings, the increased tolerance for suicide shown by whites, men, singles, and younger Americans would seem to be due, at least partly, to a heightened concern for the civil liberties of suicide victims within these groups. P-S, on the other hand, has a much greater impact on regional differences (40.4% reduction for P-S versus 19.3% for C-L) in suicide attitudes, while differences due to size of residence are equally affected by each factor (46.2% reduction). Thus, Southeasterners seem to oppose suicide on mainly prolife grounds, while rural residents are about equally influenced by civil libertarian and prolife concerns.

Civil libertarianism overshadows prolife support in its impact on *socioeconomic differences* in suicide attitudes. Controlling for C-L reduces employment status differences by 61% (versus 13% for P-S), educational differences by 63% (versus 41% for P-S), job prestige differences by 39% (versus 2% for prolife support), and income differences by 60% (versus 45% for P-S). Thus, civil libertarian concerns seem to be the primary motivating factor behind the increased tolerance of suicide victims shown by students and those who have achieved higher levels of social status, although prolife concerns also play a significant, if somewhat lesser, role in the case of educational and income differences.

Political differences in suicide attitudes appear to be about equally influenced by each factor. C-L reduces the differences between "weak" Democrats and "strong" Democrats by 35%, compared to 32% for P-S, and has an identical impact on the differences between "conservatives" and "extreme liberals," compared to 37% for P-S. Thus, as a political issue, suicide seems to divide the population along both civil libertarian and prolife lines.

Finally, as might be expected, prolife beliefs have a much greater impact than C-L on *religious differences* in suicide attitudes. The reduction due to prolife support is 33% in the case of Protestant–Jewish differences (versus a 2% reduction for C-L—i.e., the original difference widens when C-L is controlled), 39% for "frequent church attenders" versus "nonattenders" (compared to 12% for C-L), and 72% for those with "strong" versus "weak" religious preferences (compared to 26% for C-L). Thus, moral beliefs about the sanctity of human life would appear to be the principal reason for the relative lack of support for suicide victims among Protestants, frequent churchgoers, and those with strongly professed religious preferences.

In sum, sociodemographic influences on suicide attitudes seem to be mediated by prolife beliefs as well as civil libertarian values. By contrast, social isolation, life satisfaction, and anomia do not appear to contribute to any of the attitude differences we have found. Civil libertarianism plays a larger role with respect to age, gender, marital status, work status, and SES differences, while the role of prolife beliefs is greater in the case of regional and religious differences. The two factors exert comparable influence in the case of racial, residential, and political differences. Of the 15 sociodemographic correlates considered, all but 6 (marital status, education, prestige, political views, religious affiliation, and church attendance) can be statistically "explained" by the combined effect of C-L and P-S, and of the remaining 6, C-L and P-S together account for nearly 90% of the attitude differences between educational groups, over 50% of the differences due to marital status, 43% of that associated with church attendance, 28% in the case of both "prestige" and "political views," and 23% in the case of "church attendance."

Discussion

Contrary to its popular image as a socially deviant act, suicide is considered an acceptable solution to certain life problems (such as incurable diseases) by nearly half (46%) of the adult population in this country. While aggregate approval rates vary with the type of justification given (bankruptcy, family dishonor, etc.), suicide attitudes seem to be based upon coherent beliefs about the "rightness" or "wrongness" of the act, as evidenced by the tendency of supporters and opponents to maintain their relative positions regardless of the reason a person gives for taking his/her own life. These beliefs in turn vary across sociodemographic lines and closely parallel corresponding differences in prolife and civil libertarian values.

Our findings generally corroborate the results of previous surveys which show greater opposition among nonwhites and rural residents (Gallup, 1978; Ostheimer and Moore, 1982), those living in Central and Southern states (Gallup, 1978; Singh, 1979), Protestants and Catholics, frequent church attenders, and those with "intense" religious preferences (Minear and Brush, 1980). In addition, we have found increased opposition among retirees, widow/ers, low SES respondents, and the elderly as well as "strong" Democrats and political "conservatives."

Among those mediating influences examined, prolife values were found to play a greater role with respect to regional and religious differences, while civil libertarianism was more influential in the case of demographic (except race, where prolife beliefs had a comparable impact) and socioeconomic differences. For 9 of the 15 sociodemographic variables, the combined effect of both factors was sufficient to explain all existing variations in opposition, thus suggesting the existence of two distinct ideological bases for supporting or opposing a person's right to end his/her own life. The fact, however, that religious differences remain even after these ideological justifications are controlled suggests the possibility of still other moral-ideological arguments for opposing such rights.

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THE POLLS
PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

ROBERT Y. SHAPIRO
KELLY D. PATTERSON
JUDITH RUSSELL AND
JOHN T. YOUNG

Public assistance programs for the poor are the most controversial social welfare issues in the United States. In contrast to Social Security and medical care (cf. Shapiro and Smith, 1985; Shapiro and Young, 1986), many Americans associate these policies with "welfare" fraud and tangled bureaucracies and feel that these programs provide disincentives for employment. They perceive that many single-parent families, blacks, and other minorities are perennially on the welfare rolls. The American public has at best held mixed or ambivalent attitudes toward income assistance, even as the government has done more for the poor (e.g., Patterson, 1981; Hochschild, 1981; McClosky and Zaller, 1984). The public has been very uneasy toward the terms "welfare" or "relief," in contrast to "assistance for the poor" or similar phrases used in survey questions (see the summary in Smith, 1987, this issue). In principle, the public is ready to help those in need and would like to see the gap reduced between the rich and the poor, but in practice they weigh both the pros and the cons of welfare. As a result, the public, for example, has preferred programs such as food stamps to broader policies such as a guaranteed annual income.

Based upon the limited data we have, public preferences (and subgroup differences in them) appear to have been strikingly similar as far back as the first days of survey research in the 1930s (cf. Schiltz, 1970; Erskine, 1975; Shapiro and Patterson, 1986). There was a modest

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This is the third in a series of articles on public opinion and social welfare policy. ROBERT Y. SHAPIRO is Assistant Professor of Political Science at Columbia University and a NORC Research Associate. KELLY D. PATTERSON, JUDITH RUSSELL, and JOHN T. YOUNG are doctoral students in Political Science at Columbia. The authors thank Tom Smith and Sasha Heid for their comments and assistance. Support has been provided by the Ford Foundation Project on Social Welfare Policy and the American Future and by the Columbia University Council for Research in the Social Sciences; the responsibility for analysis and interpretation is the authors'.

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liberalizing trend in preferences toward welfare and assistance for blacks in the 1960s (although this is not as fully tracked by the available data as are later opinion shifts), with attitudes toward some issues leveling off or reversing by the early to mid-1970s (approximately 1974; cf. Smith, 1982). This was followed by a conservative shift up to the beginning of the 1980s. From the last half of 1981 through the present there has been a striking liberal rebound, in which opinions appear to have returned to the levels of the period before the conservative shift began in the 1970s. Since the political context and the meaning of the survey research measures of policy preferences (e.g., spending "more" relative to current levels) is different from those of the 1960s and 1970s, we cannot make exact comparisons, but our judgment is that the public is more liberal on these issues than it was when Jimmy Carter left office. It has reacted against the Reagan administration's social welfare policies and especially the spending reductions, some of which, as is often forgotten, began under Carter (i.e., slowing the rate of increase), and were consistent with the conservative movement of opinion during the mid- to late-1970s.

The liberal rebound in opinion had occurred by the time the economy bottomed out during the recession. The loss of jobs, which was the consequence of reducing inflation, increased the public's demands on government, as did the 6% cut in federal public aid expenditures from 1981 to 1982 (in current dollars, as calculated from U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1986:354, table 593). The shift in opinion is unequivocal, although it has apparently tapered off. Moreover, there is far from a consensus toward assistance for the poor, and the public has not shifted back fully toward redistribution. The public is more supportive of doing *something* about income inequality than it was a few years ago, but its renewed support for maintaining or expanding social welfare activity may not indicate a commensurate increase in support for strong measures to narrow the gap between the rich and poor. More so than in the past, it appears that opinion has also shifted to a middle ground (represented by a middle response category in survey items) in which citizens want both the government and individuals to take responsibility for dealing with economic hardships.

The belief that government's responsibility should not be complete need not prevent the further growth of American social welfare programs, although these policies may continue to be limited. The Reagan administration has helped to show, through its (reluctant) acceptance of government's current functions and responsibilities, what the role of government should continue to be in providing public assistance—certainly like its active role in economic and environmental regulation (Shapiro and Gillroy, 1984; Gillroy and Shapiro, 1986), which has substantial public support. Just as the Eisenhower and Nixon administrations provided Republican legitimacy for the foundation and expansion of the American welfare state, the Reagan administration (despite intentions of dismantling much of it) has evoked the acceptance (even by conservative segments of the public) of government's substantial responsibility for economic welfare.

The survey questions reported here were taken from the files of the Policy Change and Public Opinion Change Project at NORC (originally supported by the National Science Foundation, grant #SES-7912969 A01). These data were compiled from published and unpublished sources, and with the assistance of the Roper Center, University of Connecticut; the Louis Harris Data Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research, University of Michigan; and the NORC Library. Further information about these data can be obtained from the appropriate archive or survey organization. The national cross-section sample sizes are at least 1000 unless noted otherwise.

ABC/WP—American Broadcasting Company/*Washington Post*
CBS—Columbia Broadcasting System
CRI—Cambridge Reports, Inc., including *America Looks Ahead*. Cambridge: Cambridge Reports, 1985.
GALLUP—Gallup Polls, American Institute for Public Opinion
HARRIS—Louis Harris and Associates
LAT—*Los Angeles Times*
NYT/CBS—*New York Times*/Columbia Broadcasting System
NORC—NORC, University of Chicago
NORC–GSS—NORC's General Social Surveys
ROPER—Roper Organization
SRC/CPS—Survey Research Center/Center for Political Studies, University of Michigan, American National Election Studies
TRENDEX—Trendex, Inc./General Electric Quarterly Index of Company Relations. NB: Samples drawn from telephone directories, not RDD.

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General Support

ROPER, GALLUP, LAT: Do you think the government should provide for all people who have no other means of obtaining a living?

	Gallup		*Roper*			*LAT*
	7/38[a]	*3/40*	*11/46*	*1/47*	*11/48*	*2/83*[b]
Yes, favor	68%	65%	72%	73%	73%	83%
No, oppose	28	28	19	19	19	11
Depends, No opinion	4	7	9	8	8	4
Not aware	—	—	—	—	—	2

[a] Do you think it is the government's responsibility to pay the living expenses of needy people who are out of work?

[b] Generally speaking are you in favor of the government helping people who are unable to support themselves, or are you opposed to that—or haven't you heard enough about that yet to say?

HARRIS: Now let me read you some statements about welfare that some people have made. For each, tell me if you tend to agree or disagree. . . . It's not right to let people who need welfare to go hungry.

	2/76	*4/77*
Agree	94%	94%
Disagree	4	4
Not sure	2	2

. . . Too many people on welfare could be working.

	2/76	*4/77*
Agree	89%	92%
Disagree	7	6
Not sure	4	2

. . . Too many women whose husbands have left them with several children have no choice but to go on welfare.

	2/76	*4/77*
Agree	74%	73%
Disagree	22	23
Not sure	4	5

. . . Too many people on welfare cheat by getting money they are not entitled to.

	2/76	*4/77*
Agree	86%	89%
Disagree	9	6
Not sure	6	5

. . . The federal government has a deep responsibility for seeing to it that the poor are taken care of, that no one goes hungry, and that every person achieves a minimum standard of living.

	1975	*1976*	*1977*[a]
Agree	68%	66%	71%
Disagree	27	27	20
Not sure	5	7	8

[a] Do you feel that government has a basic responsibility to help families who have no means of support by giving them enough money to meet their minimum needs, or don't you feel that way?

NORC–GSS: I'd like to talk with you about issues some people tell us are important. Please look at card 00. Some people think the government in Washington should do everything possible to improve the standard of living of all poor Americans; they are at point 1 on this card. Other people think it is not the government's responsibility, and that each person should take care of himself; they are at point 5. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you made up your mind on this?

	2–4/75	*2–4/83*	*2–4/84*	*2–4/86*
1. Government	29%	26%	17%	18%
2.	10	19	11	12
3. Agree with both	35	32	46	45
4.	10	10	14	11
5. People	13	10	8	11
6. Don't know	3	4	3	2

NYT/CBS: In your opinion, do you think that most people who receive money from welfare could get along without it if they tried, or do you think most of them really need help?

	1/80	*1/86*
Get along without	51%	40%
Really need help	39	35
Half and half (vol)	—	20
DK/NA	10	4

NYT/CBS, ABC/WP: There were many government programs created in the 1960s to try to improve the conditions of poor people in this country. Do you think these programs generally made things better, made things worse, or do you think they didn't have much impact one way or the other?

	NYT/CBS				*ABC/WP*[a]
	1/78	*11/80*	*11/84*	*1/86*	*2/86*
Made better	31%	30%	41%	39%	44%
Made worse	14	20	19	18	18
Not much impact	46	42	29	38	34
DK/NA	9	8	12	6	4

[a] In the 1960's and 1970's, the government began a number of assistance programs for poor people. Generally speaking, do you think those programs helped poor people, hurt poor people, or didn't make any difference one way or the other?

Government Spending

NORC–GSS: We are faced with many problems in this country, none of which can be solved easily or inexpensively. I'm going to name some of these problems, and for each one I'd like you to tell me whether you think we're spending too much money on it, too little money, or about the right amount. First, . . . are we spending too much, too little, or about the right amount on . . . Welfare.

	2–4/73	*2–4/74*	*2–4/75*	*2–4/76*	*2–4/77*	*2–4/78*
Too little	20%	22%	23%	13%	12%	13%
About right	24	32	29	22	23	25
Too much	51	42	43	60	60	58
Don't know	4	4	5	4	5	4

	2–4/80	*2–4/82*	*2–4/83*	*2–4/84*	*2–4/85*	*2–4/86*
Too little	13%	20%	21%	24%	19%	22%
About right	26	28	28	33	33	34
Too much	57	48	47	40	45	40
Don't know	4	4	4	3	4	4
				N = 484	*N* = 749	*N* = 726

ROPER: Same as NORC–GSS question wording, preceding.

	10/71	*12/73*	*12/74*	*12/75*	*12/76*	*12/77*
Too much	53%	48%	49%	53%	59%	58%
Too little	18	18	19	17	13	15
About right	19	24	23	22	21	20
Don't know	11	9	9	9	7	7

	12/78	*12/79*	*12/80*	*12/81*	*12/82*	*12/83*
Too much	60%	57%	58%	52%	45%	43%
Too little	13	13	16	20	22	20
About right	20	25	21	23	26	31
Don't know	6	5	6	5	7	6

CRI: Thinking ahead to next year, I'd like you to tell me in which area you would like to see government spending decreased most.

	Q3 77	*Q3 78*	*Q4 79*	*Q4 80*	*Q4 81*	*Q4 82*	*Q4 83*	*Q4 84*
Welfare	19%	27%	22%	21%	18%	9%	11%	9%

NOTE: "Q" refers to quarter.

ABC/WP: I'm going to mention several general categories on which the federal government spends money. After each, please tell me whether you feel spending for it should be increased, decreased, or left about the same. . . . the poor.

	2/81	*12/82*[a]	*7/83*
Increased	49%	62%	67%
Decreased	15	8	6
Left about same	33	28	26

[a] On another matter, I'm going . . . programs for the poor.

CRI: Some people have argued that President Reagan's budget reductions are cutting too deeply into social programs that help poor and disadvantaged people. Do you generally agree or disagree that President Reagan has cut too much from these programs?

	Q2/81	*Q3/81*	*Q4/81*	*Q1/82*	*Q1/83*	*Q1/84*
Agree	47%	47%	56%	57%	56%	54%
(He's cut too little)	3	4	5	6	5	2
Disagree	39	38	32	31	31	31
Don't know	11	12	7	6	8	10

(If respondent agrees that President Reagan's budget reductions are cutting too deeply into social programs) What particular programs do you think have been cut too much?

	Q3/81	*Q1/82*	*Q1/83*	*Q1/84*
Welfare, aid to dependent families, aid to poor	11%	18%	16%	18%
. . . Food stamp program	5	7	4	9

NOTE: "Q" refers to quarter.

LAT: Do you approve or disapprove of President Reagan's proposal to reduce spending on social services? Do you feel strongly about that, or not so strongly?

	4/81	*1/82*	*11/82*[a]	*12/83*[a]	*1/85*[a]
Strongly approve	33%	24%	20%	19%	16%
Approve	24	19	17	21	20
Disapprove	16	15	21	22	21
Strongly disapprove	21	32	33	30	36
Not sure	6	9	8	7	7
Refused	0	1	1	1	0

[a] Generally speaking, do you approve or disapprove of President Reagan's proposals to reduce spending on social services?

Redistribution and Guaranteed Income

TRENDEX: Do you think that the difference between the income of the rich and the poor in this country is much too great, somewhat too great, or as it should be?

	1–2/82	*7–8/82*
Much too great	48%	49%
Somewhat too great	22	23
As it should be	27	25
DK,NA	3	2

HARRIS: Now do you favor or oppose. . . . Using the federal government to try to make a fairer distribution of wealth in the country?

		Voters
	8/76	*10/76*
Favor	41%	38%
Oppose	43	47
Not sure	16	15

NORC, NORC–GSS: Some people think that the government in Washington ought to reduce the income differences between the rich and the poor, perhaps by raising the taxes of wealthy families or by giving income assistance to the poor. Others think that the government should not concern itself with reducing the income differences between the rich and the poor. . . . Here is a card with a scale from 1 to 7. Think of a score of 1 as meaning that the government ought to reduce the income differences between rich and the poor, and a score of 7 meaning that the government should not concern itself with reducing income differences. What score between 1 and 7 comes closest to the way you feel?

		NORC			*NORC–GSS*			
		12/73	*2–4/78*	*2–4/78*[a]	*2–4/80*	*2–4/83*	*2–4/84*	*2–4/86*
Gov't should do	1.	36%	19%	18%	17%	20%	21%	23%
	2.	12	11	8	9	11	12	9
	3.	10	17	19	16	16	15	17
	4.	11	21	22	20	17	17	21
	5.	6	11	11	12	11	13	11
	6.	7	8	8	7	8	8	6
Gov't shouldn't do	7.	15	12	11	16	14	12	12
Don't know		3	1	2	3	2	2	1

[a] ". . . the income differences between the rich and poor should be reduced. . . ."

GALLUP: It has been proposed that instead of relief and welfare payments, the government should guarantee every family a minimum annual income. Do you favor or oppose this idea?

	9/65	*5/68*
Favor	20%	28%
Oppose	67	62
No opinion	14	9
		N = 868

GALLUP: As you may know, there is talk about giving every family an income of at least $3200 a year, which would be the amount for a family of four. If the family earns less than this, the government would make up the difference. Would you favor or oppose such a plan?

	5/68	*12/68*
Favor	36%	32%
Oppose	58	62
No opinion	6	6

HARRIS, CBS: Now let me ask you about some of the points in that proposal to change the welfare system. For each, tell me if you tend to agree or disagree with that specific proposal. . . . The federal government should provide a basic income of $1,600 for each family of four on welfare.

	HARRIS *9/69*	*CBS* *10/70*[a]
Agree	58%	47%
Disagree	42	53

[a] It's been proposed that all families in America be guaranteed a minimum income. For example, a family of four would be guaranteed $1600 a year. If the family couldn't earn $1600, the government would make up the difference. Would you favor or oppose a program for guaranteed income?

Food Stamps

GALLUP: A U.S. Senator has proposed that the government give free food stamps to all families whose earnings are under twenty dollars a week. Do you favor or oppose such a proposal?

	August 1939[a]	*March 1969*
Favor	62%	68%
Oppose	27	25
No opinion	11	7

[a] The government has tried out a food stamp plan which lets people on relief buy certain surplus farm products below their regular selling price. The government makes up the difference to the merchant. Do you approve or disapprove of this plan?

GALLUP: Would you favor or oppose giving food stamps at a greatly reduced rate to families whose earnings are twenty to sixty dollars a week?

	August 1939[a]	*March 1969*
Favor	57%	60%
Oppose	43	31
No opinion	—	9

[a] Would you approve of extending this plan to families earning less than $20 a week as well as to persons on relief?

NYT/CBS: If you had a say in making up the federal budget this year, which programs would *you* like to see increased and which reduced? Should federal spending on . . . food stamps . . . be increased, decreased, or kept about the same?

	1/81	*4/81*
Increased	11%	12%
Decreased	47	50
Kept the same	36	33
No opinion	6	5

LAT: If more government services have to be cut back, would you favor cutting back on federal benefits like food stamps, or would you prefer some other kind of cutback?

	1/82	*1/84*[a]
Favor	56%	38%
Other	42	58
Not sure	2	4

[a] Would you favor cutting back on the food stamp program, or would you rather consider some other way to cut government expenses, instead?

ABC/WP: I'd like to ask about some specific federal government programs. For each, please tell me whether you feel spending for that program should be increased, decreased, or left about the same. . . . Food stamps.

	1981	*1986*
Spend about the same	33%	48%
Increase	15	18
Decrease	49	32
No opinion	3	2

Assistance for Blacks and Minorities

ROPER: There are many problems facing our nation today. But at certain times some things are more important than others, and need more attention from our federal government than others. (Card shown respondent) I'd like to know for each of the things on this list whether you think it is something the government should be making a major effort on now, or something the government should be making some effort on now, or something not needing any particular government effort now. . . . Trying to solve the problems caused by ghettos, race, and poverty.

	6/74	*6/75*	*6/76*	*6/77*	*6/78*	*6/79*
Major effort	60%	59%	60%	66%	55%	49%
Some effort	28	29	29	27	31	39
Needs no particular effort	9	9	8	5	10	9
Don't know	3	4	3	3	4	3

	6/80	*6/81*	*6/82*	*6/83*	*6/84*
Major effort	56%	53%	50%	55%	57%
Some effort	34	34	38	34	33
Needs no particular effort	10	9	8	8	8
Don't know	3	3	3	3	3

NORC/GSS: We are faced with many problems in this country, none of which can be solved easily or inexpensively. I'm going to name some of these problems, and for each one I'd like you to tell me whether you think we're spending too much money on it, too little money, or about the right amount. First, . . . are we spending too much, too little, or about the right amount on . . . Improving the conditions of blacks.

	2–4/73	*2–4/74*	*2–4/75*	*2–4/76*	*2–4/77*	*2–4/78*
Too little	33%	31%	27%	27%	25%	24%
About right	39	42	41	41	42	43
Too much	22	21	24	25	25	25
Don't know	6	7	8	7	8	7

	2–4/80	*2–4/82*	*2–4/83*	*2–4/84*	*2–4/85*	*2–4/86*
Too little	24%	28%	29%	35%	31%	34%
About right	44	44	44	43	43	43
Too much	24	20	18	16	20	16
Don't know	8	8	9	6	7	8

SRC/CPS: Some people feel that the government in Washington should make every possible effort to improve the social and economic position of *Negroes* and other minority groups. Others feel that the government should not make any special effort to help minority *peoples* but they should be *expected* to help themselves. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought about this?

	1970	*1972*	*1974*	*1976*	*1978*
1. Gov. help minority groups	15%	13%	14%	13%	12%
2.	8	7	7	9	6
3.	8	13	12	13	10
4.	25	24	24	22	25
5.	12	11	12	12	16
6.	11	12	9	10	12
7. Help themselves	22	19	22	21	19
	4/80[a]	*6/80*[a]	*11/80*[a]	*11/82*[b]	*11/84*[b]
1. Gov. help minority groups	6%	5%	5%	8%	9%
2.	5	4	5	6	8
3.	9	10	12	12	15
4.	24	26	30	30	31
5.	20	17	21	16	18
6.	18	20	13	17	10
7. Help themselves	18	18	14	12	9

[a] . . . blacks . . . , even if it means giving them preferential treatment. Suppose these people are at one end of the scale at point number 1. Others. . . . Suppose these people are at the other end at point 7. And of course, some other people have opinions somewhere in between at points 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6. Where . . .

[b] . . . blacks. . . . (Suppose these people are at one end of the scale at point number 1.) Others . . . help minorities because they should help themselves. (Suppose these people are at the other end at point 7. And of course, some other people have opinions somewhere in between at points 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6.)

NORC–GSS: Now look at card RR (below). Some people think that (blacks/Negroes) have been discriminated against for so long that the government has a special obligation to help improve their living standards. Others believe that the government should not be giving special treatment to (blacks/Negroes). . . . I strongly agree the government is obligated to help blacks, I agree with both answers, I strongly agree that the government shouldn't give special treatment.

	1975	*1983*	*1984*	*1986*
1. Government help	16%	8%	9%	8%
2.	8	9	9	10
3. Agree with both	21	26	30	29
4.	12	20	17	18
5. No special treatment	40	33	30	33
6. Don't know	3	4	4	3

NOTE

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ERRATUM

Table 2 in Kent Tedin, "Change and Stability in Presidential Popularity at the Individual Level" (POQ, Winter 1986) contains several errors in the count of the response permutations. Professor Tedin will provide a corrected table upon request to him at the Department of Political Science, University of Houston, 4800 Calhoun Road, Houston, TX 77004.

THE IMPACT OF INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING ON PUBLIC OPINION AND POLICYMAKING

TARGETING TOXIC WASTE

DAVID L. PROTESS, FAY LOMAX COOK,
THOMAS R. CURTIN, MARGARET T. GORDON,
DONNA R. LEFF, MAXWELL E. McCOMBS,
AND PETER MILLER

Abstract This article reports the fourth in a continuing series of case studies that explore the impact of news media investigative journalism on the general public, policymakers, and public policy. The media disclosures in this field experiment had limited effects on the general public but were influential in changing the attitudes of policymakers. The study describes how changes in public policymaking resulted from collaboration between journalists and government officials. The authors develop a model that is a beginning step toward specifying the conditions under which media investigations influence public attitudes and agendas.

This article reports the fourth in a series of field experiments that test the agenda-setting hypothesis (McCombs and Shaw, 1972) for news media investigative reports.[1] Our goal is to treat these field experiments as case studies from which we can develop empirically grounded theory that specifies the conditions under which investigative reports influence public agendas and policymaking priorities. Unique to stud-

DAVID L. PROTESS is Associate Professor in the Medill School of Journalism and the Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research (CUAPR); FAY LOMAX COOK is Associate Professor in the School of Education and CUAPR; THOMAS R. CURTIN is a CUAPR Research Fellow; MARGARET T. GORDON is Director, CUAPR; DONNA R. LEFF is Associate Professor at the Medill School of Journalism and CUAPR; PETER MILLER is Associate Professor in the School of Speech and CUAPR, all at Northwestern University. MAXWELL E. MC COMBS is Professor and Chairman of the Department of Journalism at the University of Texas. The authors would like to thank Doris Graber for comments on earlier versions. Order of authorship is alphabetical after Protess.

[1] The studies are being conducted by an interdisciplinary team at the Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research, Northwestern University.

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ies of agenda-setting is our use of pretest–posttest research designs, made possible by journalists' disclosure of forthcoming investigative stories to the research team with adequate time for pre- and postpublication survey interviewing. A further distinctive feature is our concern with detailed tracing of the life course of a media report from an examination of the initial investigation by journalists, to the publication of the report, the effects on the general public and policymakers, and eventual policy outcomes.

The first of these studies (Cook et al., 1983) found that a nationally televised investigative news report on fraud and abuse in the federally funded home health care program had significant effects on the agendas of both the public and policymakers. The study found that home health care–related issues (and not unrelated issues) became significantly more important to citizens and policymakers exposed to the televised report than to nonviewers. Yet, actual policy changes after the report's publication resulted more from direct pressure for change by the journalists themselves than from demands by the general public or political constituencies.

The second study (Protess et al., 1985) measured the impact of a Chicago *Sun–Times* investigative series disclosing government improprieties in the reporting and handling of rape against Chicago area women. The effects of the newspaper series were considerably more limited than in the first study, in part because the pretest disclosed an already high level of awareness and concern about the problem. The most striking result was a sharp increase in the number, length, and prominence of stories about rape in the *Sun–Times*—that is, the largest measurable effect was on the medium itself rather than on its audience. However, as in the home health care study, policymaking effects included legislative hearings and related "symbolic" political actions (Edelman, 1964).[2]

The effects of the third investigative report, a five-part local television series about repeatedly brutal Chicago police officers, provided an "in-between" case (Leff, Protess, and Brooks, 1986). The series had significant effects on viewer attitudes about police brutality but not on their assessment of the priority or salience of the problem in comparison with other social concerns. Nonetheless, the series resulted in major policy changes within the Chicago Police Department, in part because its publication coincided with a hotly contested Chicago mayoral election in which mayoral challenger Harold Washington used the series to help make the Department an issue.

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[2] Symbolic acts have been described as "dramatic in outline and empty of realistic detail" (Edelman, 1964:9). Here we use the term to describe policy "changes" that are largely rhetorical. Thus, when a public official responds to a media exposé by making speeches about the problem, by convening governmental hearings, or by announcing as news previously approved legislation, we call these acts symbolic. Conversely, "substantive" reforms are tangible regulatory, legislative, or administrative changes that occur after an investigative story is published. In making this distinction, we do not mean to suggest that substantive reforms are necessarily more likely than symbolic reforms to lead in the long run to the *correction* of the problem disclosed by the media.

Why is it that some investigative reports "catch on" and affect the views of members of the public and policy elites, while others do not? Why is it that all three investigative reports had some form of policy impact, despite the fact that they did not all have effects on the public and policymakers? In answer to the first question, several explanations have tentatively been suggested in our earlier work: the nature of the medium of presentation (print versus television); the style of presentation (unambiguous, with clear villains and heroes, versus ambiguous, where fault is not clear and where solutions seem difficult to find); the "age" of the issue on the media's agenda (a new issue that has infrequently been presented in the past and about which the public has little knowledge versus an old issue that has recurred over time on the media's agenda and about which the public is aware).

None of these explanations provides a possible answer to the second question concerning the investigative reports' impact on policy. Regardless of the above factors, some form of policy impact occurred in all the cases we have examined to date. In the home health care and rape cases, the impact was symbolic with legislative hearings and proposals for policy changes. In the police brutality case, the impact was substantive with actual, major policy changes occurring. Clearly, more case studies are needed before we can develop an empirically grounded theory that specifies under what conditions and with what kinds of issues media investigations influence public agendas and policymaking processes.

The current study examines the public opinion and policymaking impact of a local television investigative series concerning the toxic waste disposal practices of a major Chicago university. In this case, the publication format was virtually identical to the earlier police brutality study: a multipart television report, aired during a "ratings sweeps" period, by the same correspondent on the same local television station. Further, one of the primary "targets" of the series was also a city regulatory agency, the Chicago Fire Department, which was accused of failing to enforce its environmental safety regulations. However, here we examine a different kind of issue—i.e., toxic waste disposal—at a different point in the city's political history—i.e., a year into Mayor Harold Washington's first term, when he was locked in a struggle with the City Council over control of Chicago's city government.

This article first will discuss the attitudinal impact of the toxic waste series on the general public and policy elites. Next, we trace the effects of the series on public policymaking in Chicago, focusing on the Fire

Department's response to disclosures about its shortcomings. Finally, we analyze the findings of the four studies and try to identify and explain emerging patterns.

Research Design

The pretest, posttest experimental design is highly appropriate, but not traditionally utilized, in research involving nonlaboratory studies of media effects (Cook and Campbell, 1979). More typical in such research endeavors is the use of cross-sectional (McCombs and Shaw, 1972; McLeod, Becker, and Byrnes, 1974; Erbring, Goldenberg, and Miller, 1980) or panel study designs (Tipton, Haney, and Baseheart, 1975; Shaw and McCombs, 1977; MacKuen, 1981). In this study, however, two factors made field experimentation practicable: the reporters' cooperation with researchers and the lengthy preparation time of the report, which made advance planning by the researchers possible. Thus, researchers were able to obtain prepublication measurements of public and policymaker attitudes about the precise subject matter of the forthcoming television series. Survey questions about unrelated matters were used to obtain control data.

The resulting television series, "Wasted Time," was broadcast on three successive nights beginning 13 May 1984 on WMAQ-TV, Channel 5, a Chicago-based station owned and operated by the National Broadcasting Company (NBC). The reporter was Peter Karl, a well-known local investigative journalist who also served as correspondent on the police brutality series that was the subject of our third study. The series was promoted heavily by the television station, since it was broadcast in the middle of a highly important ratings period.

The series disclosed that the University of Chicago was storing potentially hazardous toxic chemical and radioactive wastes beneath several of its buildings, including some classrooms. Stories alleged that the storage violated Chicago Fire Department regulations, as well as the environmental standards of several state and federal agencies, including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and the U.S. Department of Energy. Each night, the broadcast described an assortment of delays by the University in constructing relatively inexpensive facilities to ameliorate the waste disposal problem, thus giving the investigative report its title "Wasted Time." At no time did the series state that anyone at the University was in immediate danger, but the use of pictures of chemical explosions and fires that had occurred on the campus a decade earlier suggested the potential harm involved. One implication of the series was that the violations would not have persisted over time if certain federal, state, and local agencies were doing their jobs properly (i.e., the EPA, OSHA, the U.S. Department of Energy, and the Chicago Fire Department).

GENERAL PUBLIC

Through random-digit dialing techniques, 395 respondents from the Chicago Metropolitan area were contacted two weeks before the television series aired. Telephone numbers were generated from listings in area directories. The last digit of each chosen number was replaced with a random digit to ensure that unlisted telephone numbers were included in the sample. Those who refused to be interviewed were found to be similar to respondents in gender, age, education, and the area of residence.

The telephone sample was then stratified by the respondents' self-reported television viewing habits into regular watchers of Channel 5 news (*N* = 208), and watchers of other evening newscasts or non-watchers of any television news (*N* = 186). We expected that Channel 5 newswatchers were likely to be exposed to the investigative series, while others would constitute a quasi-experimental comparison group. One week after the broadcast of the series, researchers recontacted the entire sample. As indicated in Table 1, 235 persons agreed to be reinterviewed, comprising the general public sample in this study. The respondents in this sample, though proportionately more female than the pretest respondents, did not differ significantly in educational level, age, or ethnic or racial background from the individuals who refused to be reinterviewed or who could not be recontacted after the pretest.[3]

Since general viewing habits are not perfect predictors of the public's actual *exposure* to a specific television series, respondents were asked at the conclusion of the posttest interview whether they had "seen, read, or heard anything about recent news media investigative stories about toxic waste disposal problems at the University of Chicago." Follow-up questions were then asked about the source and extent of the exposure. Those responding "yes" to the question were considered "series-aware" group members, while those responding

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[3] Of respondents interviewed for the pretest, 59% were female, while 64.7% of the posttest respondents were female. The change in gender corresponds to a chi-square value of 7.2035 with one degree of freedom ($p < .01$) after completing the Yates correction for the continuity of the data. No other demographic changes between pre- and posttest were statistically significant. Moreover, no significant demographic differences were found between the Channel 5 viewers and nonviewers (identified in Table 2). The percentage of respondents who agreed to be reinterviewed (60%) was slightly higher than in two of our previous three studies. Nonetheless, the attrition rate was still fairly substantial, due in large measure to the problem of keeping respondents in panels in which they are given no inducements to participate.

Table 1. Quasi-Experimental Design Distribution of Respondents

Respondent Groupings	Pretest	Posttest
TV 5 Watchers/Nonwatchers		
Treatment (watchers)	208 (52.7%)	131 (55.7%)
Comparison (nonwatchers)	186 (47.0%)	103 (43.9%)
Unclassified	1 (0.3%)	1 (0.4%)
TOTAL	395 (100.0%)	235 (100.0%)
Series Aware/Nonaware		
Treatment (series-aware)	NA	83 (35.3%)
Comparison (series-unaware)	NA	146 (62.2%)
Unclassified	NA	6 (2.5%)
TOTAL	NA	235 (100.0%)

"no" were defined as a comparison group. Respondents in these two groups did not differ significantly in gender, educational level, age, or ethnic or racial background. Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents in this analysis. It is important to emphasize that respondents in both analyses are from the same overall sample. It is only the definition of "treatment" and "control" that changes.

To avoid sensitizing respondents to the subject of the investigative series, researchers embedded questions related to toxic waste disposal and other environmental problems among questions about crime, unemployment, police brutality, child abuse, and governmental corruption. Of the forty separate items in the questionnaire, twelve were related to general environmental issues and six to chemical or radioactive waste disposal problems. We hypothesized that change would occur among the Channel 5 viewers on questions about the environment and toxic waste, while responses to other questions would remain constant from pre- to posttest. We expected the comparison groups' responses to remain constant on all questions.

The questions can be divided into three categories: (1) attitudes and agendas, (2) affective responses, and (3) changes in behavior. We asked respondents to rate the importance of environmental issues compared to other problems; to evaluate the performance of federal, state, and local governmental agencies, including some related and others unrelated to the environment; to describe their level of anxiety about various environmental problems and their personal reactions to news stories about them; and to discuss what they have done to avoid environmental hazards. We hypothesized that in posttest interviews, the treatment groups would consider toxic waste and related environmental problems to be more important and would change their attitudes, feelings, and actions about them.

POLICYMAKERS AND POLICYMAKING

A purposive sample of forty policy elites was selected for their interest and potential influence on environmental policymaking. Those surveyed included public administrators from Illinois and federal environmental protection agencies, state legislators, members of the Chicago City Council, University officials, and lobbyists from public interest groups and private waste disposal companies. Persons who were considered likely to know about the investigative series prior to pretest interviewing were excluded from the sample. Interviews were conducted by telephone; 31 of the 40 respondents were reinterviewed after the television broadcast.

As in our previous studies, we made no attempt to establish a group of nonexposed elite respondents. We expected that persons with significant interest in the subject of an investigative report would almost certainly hear about it, even if they failed to view the particular stories. Indeed, 23 of the 31 respondents indicated in posttest interviews that they "saw, read, or heard" something about the series. Statistical analyses were performed on the self-defined "exposed" and "unexposed" groups.

The policymakers were asked a series of questions that were identical to those in the survey of the general public. The questions included items both related and unrelated to the subject of the investigative series. In addition, the elite respondents were asked about their past, present, and anticipated future policymaking activities related to toxic waste disposal problems.

After the series, researchers tracked policy developments that might be attributable to the Channel 5 investigation by interviewing an expanded sample of policymakers and conducting analyses of related budgets, legislation, and regulatory and administrative initiatives. Content analyses of local media coverage of environmental issues were also performed both as an additional indicator of the level of governmental response to the series and as a measure of its impact on the news media's agendas.

Impact of the Investigative Report on the General Public

In examining public attitudes before and after the broadcast of the Channel 5 investigation, we wanted to determine whether changes occurred on questionnaire items related to the subject of the series. To test whether the changes between the pretest and posttest were different for the exposed group from the nonexposed group, we used analysis of covariance (ANCOVA), employing the pretest score as the covariate. Table 2 shows the mean responses and significance levels for Channel 5 viewers and nonviewers as well as for the series-aware and unaware groups.

The data show no effects of the series, as measured by the ANCOVA analysis. Some items bordered on significant change, however, giving slight indications of change in perception due to the series. In particular, compared to those unaware of the series, those exposed to the reports were slightly more likely to say that environmental news stories cause confusion. Both series-aware and unaware respondents reported worrying somewhat less about improper storage and disposal of chemical waste at the posttest. Both groups of respondents tended to decrease their evaluation of the Chicago Fire Department, which suggests that other stimuli produced a small judgmental change. Evaluation of environmental agencies other than the Fire Department remained constant, as did measures of respondents' behavior concerning environmental problems.

In short, the agenda-setting hypothesis was not supported by the findings. Responses to questions about the importance of toxic waste disposal in relation to other issues did not change significantly. In comparison with other problems, toxic chemical and radioactive waste disposal was consistently at or near the bottom of their reported agendas.

Impact of the Investigative Report on Policymakers and Policymaking

Table 3 reports the mean responses of policymakers to the surveys before and after the investigative report. The small size of the nonexposed group and the nonprobability sampling procedure make generalization from these data tentative. Recognizing the limitations of inference from these data, we believe that the findings in Table 3 indicate stronger support for the hypotheses than do the survey results for the general public.

Policy elites were asked to evaluate the performance of eleven government agencies. We expected that the investigative report would result in policy elites' lowering their assessments of the jobs done by four agencies—the Chicago Fire Department, the U.S. Department of Energy, the EPA, and OSHA. The changes were statistically significant ($p < .05$) for the performance evaluations of three of the four government agencies targeted by Channel 5 as bearing responsibility

Table 2. Mean Responses for General Public[a]

	Channel 5 Viewers (N = 131)		Channel 5 Nonviewers (N = 103)			Series-Aware (N = 83)		Not Aware (N = 146)		
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Sig.[b]	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Sig.[b]
Cognitive Items										
Importance of toxic waste disposal	3.48	3.43	3.53	3.41	ns	3.51	3.42	3.50	3.42	ns
Fire Dept. does its job	3.67	3.52	3.67	3.53	ns	3.69	3.50	3.68	3.55	ns
U.S. Dept. of Energy does its job	2.66	2.72	2.40	2.53	ns	2.48	2.58	2.57	2.64	ns
U.S. EPA does its job	2.61	2.57	2.41	2.56	ns	2.45	2.39	2.55	2.65	ns
OSHA does its job	2.63	2.76	2.52	2.75	ns	2.48	2.65	2.63	2.80	ns
NRC does its job	2.56	2.61	2.22	2.37	ns	2.35	2.37	2.46	2.59	ns
Fed. officials adequately enforce toxic waste disposal regulations	2.50	2.48	2.41	2.42	ns	2.49	2.43	2.44	2.43	ns
Fire officials regularly inspect buildings for hazards	2.44	2.55	2.48	2.63	ns	2.43	2.57	2.47	2.59	ns
Local universities have influence in the city	2.47	2.55	2.58	2.64	ns	2.39	2.44	2.62	2.68	ns

Affective Items										
Worry of improper storage and disposal of chemical waste	3.36	3.23	3.27	3.13	ns	3.44	3.21	3.27	3.17	ns
Worry of danger from radioactive accidents	3.13	3.03	3.12	2.96	ns	3.12	3.04	3.15	3.00	ns
News stories frustrate me	1.77	1.73	1.73	1.72	ns	1.74	1.76	1.76	1.69	ns
News stories confuse me	1.54	1.60	1.58	1.59	ns	1.57	1.69	1.56	1.56	ns
News stories make me feel helpless	1.61	1.70	1.63	1.68	ns	1.67	1.78	1.59	1.65	ns
News stories anger me	1.74	1.73	1.75	1.75	ns	1.78	1.77	1.73	1.74	ns
News stories make me feel indifferent	1.29	1.32	1.31	1.40	ns	1.28	1.35	1.32	1.36	ns
Shrug off or don't remember stories	1.52	1.18	1.26	1.25	ns	1.12	1.16	1.25	1.23	ns
Behavioral Items										
Have you acted to solve problems on the report?	1.38	1.36	1.29	1.29	ns	1.39	1.35	1.30	1.31	ns
Have you acted to avoid risks?	1.54	1.56	1.55	1.55	ns	1.55	1.62	1.55	1.52	ns

[a] Higher numbers indicate more positive responses (4 equals "very important," "agree strongly," and "very adequate").

[b] Significance levels are based on distributions of *f* ratios from Analyses of Covariance (ANCOVA) adjusting for initial between-group differences (Reichardt, 1979).

Table 3. Mean Responses for Policy Elites[a]

	Exposed (N = 23)		Unexposed (N = 8)		
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Sig.[b]
Agency Evaluations					
Chicago Fire Department	3.42	2.79	2.71	2.71	ns
U.S. Department of Energy	2.50	2.05	2.71	3.00	*
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	2.91	2.27	3.13	3.13	*
Occupational Safety and Health Administration	2.33	2.00	3.13	3.25	*
Department of Streets and Sanitation	2.83	2.72	3.00	3.00	ns
Bureau of Inspectional Services	2.20	2.07	2.75	2.75	ns
Police Department	2.84	2.84	3.57	3.57	ns
Park District	2.60	2.55	3.20	3.20	ns
U.S. Social Security Commission	2.56	2.50	3.00	3.50	*
U.S. Department of Immigration	2.29	2.21	3.00	3.17	ns
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services	2.45	2.40	3.17	3.17	ns
Agenda-Setting					
Importance of toxic waste disposal	3.52	3.61	2.63	2.63	ns
Importance of environmental pollutants	3.09	3.27	2.63	2.25	*
Importance of violent crime	3.48	3.39	3.38	3.50	ns
Importance of unemployment	3.74	3.61	3.75	3.75	ns
Importance of police brutality	2.76	2.67	2.00	2.00	ns
Importance of child abuse	3.32	3.18	3.50	3.17	ns
Behavioral					
Past time spent on toxic waste problems	2.39	2.57	2.38	2.38	ns
Ideal time spent on toxic waste problems	2.64	2.73	2.50	2.63	ns
Expected future time spent on toxic waste problems	2.50	3.05	2.50	2.25	*

[a] Higher numbers indicate more positive responses (4 = "very important" or does job "very well").

[b] Significance levels are based on distributions of *f* ratios from Analyses of Covariance adjusting for initial between-group differences (Reichardt, 1979).

for the problems disclosed. Change in the evaluation of the fourth agency, the Chicago Fire Department, was in the expected downward direction ($p < .10$). Change was also significant for one of the seven unrelated agencies added as controls—the U.S. Social Security Commission—but this appears to be a chance change by the unexposed policy elites whose evaluations increased to more positive ones while the series-exposed elites' evaluations did not change.

Marked changes also occurred on one of the questions designed to measure the behavior of policymakers. When asked, "In the coming months, how much of your time do you think *will* be spent on toxic waste disposal problems?" the group exposed to the series changed significantly in the direction of "more" time. This finding is consistent with our analysis of the actual policymaking consequences of the investigative series. Since the series aired, each of the governmental agencies named by Channel 5 initiated actions to monitor the University's compliance with toxic waste disposal regulations.

Perhaps the most dramatic of these enforcement efforts was made by the Chicago Fire Department. On the morning after the first broadcast, a team of high-ranking Department officials inspected the buildings where chemical wastes were stored, and cited the University for failing to comply with 20 of the City's safety regulations. The Department gave the University 30 days to comply with its standards and threatened publicly to initiate criminal proceedings if it failed to do so.

Media coverage of the Fire Department's initiative was swift. A Chicago *Tribune* headline in the newspaper's next edition read: "City Faults U of C on Fire Safety," and the *Sun--Times* reported that the "U of C Is Cited as Fire Violator." The *Hyde Park Herald*, a weekly newspaper serving the community surrounding the University, headlined: "UC Responds to Hazard Charge" and called editorially for a study of the problem. All three newspapers credited the Channel 5 investigation as the catalyst for the governmental actions.

Channel 5 itself reported the "Fire Department crackdown" on its evening newscast later the same day. (The station's television competitors ignored the story, however.) Pictures of the Department's inspections were shown, and the story was repeated in the remaining two segments of the investigative series. The television station claimed that the action was taken "in response to our series on hazardous waste disposal problems at the University." In fact, however, Channel 5 correspondent Peter Karl had discussed the possibility of an inspection in several telephone conversations with Fire Department officials two days *before* the first part of the series was aired. The officials had agreed both that the inspection would occur and that it would not take place until the morning *after* the airing of the initial broadcast. Channel 5, in turn, covered the inspection as if it occurred at the initiative of the

Fire Department, i.e., without direct prodding by its investigative reporter.

This form of journalist–policymaker collaboration has been described in our earlier studies (Cook et al., 1983; Molotch, Protess, and Gordon, 1987). What is significant here is that general public and policymaker respondents were exposed to news media stories about governmental "reforms" before the allegations in Channel 5's three-part series had been completely aired. Thus, the public's perceptions of the series may have been colored somewhat by media reports that included the presentation of both a problem and its "solution."

Interviews by researchers with Fire Department officials at the end of the 30-day compliance period indicated that the University had, in fact, corrected the fire hazard aspect of its waste disposal problem. The University also was implementing plans for the much-delayed facility to provide a more permanent solution to its environmental difficulties. However, content analyses of Channel 5 and other media revealed that the media did not cover these *post*series developments. Unlike our study of the *Sun–Times* rape series, the issues of toxic waste disposal at the University of Chicago or elsewhere did not rise on the news media's agenda of concerns. Content analysis of the Chicago *Tribune* for 3-month periods both before and after the publication of the Channel 5 series showed a slight *decline* in column inches of news stories and editorials on toxic waste disposal problems. A review of the assignment log at Channel 5 for the same periods showed only a minor increase in the frequency of such stories.

Similarly, Table 3 shows that policymakers' assessments of the *importance* of toxic waste disposal as an issue did not change significantly after the broadcast of the series. Perhaps this was because by the end of the series and the time of the posttest interview, the problems were being eliminated. There is no indication that the series produced any substantive initiatives (i.e., legislative, regulative, or budgetary) to deal with larger questions of toxic waste disposal, either on college campuses or elsewhere in the U.S. society. Thus, we call its policy impact "individualistic" because it was specific only to the particular problem documented at the University of Chicago.

Discussion of Findings

With the completion of this fourth study, we are somewhat better able to compare the varying impacts of the different investigative reports. Table 4 summarizes the results of the four case studies. Both the home health care broadcast and the police brutality television series were found to have greater *public* impact than either the toxic waste or the

Table 4. Summary of Four Case Study Findings of the Impact of Investigative Reports on the Public, Policy Elites, and Policy

Subject of Case Study	Medium	Format	Journalists' Involvement with Policymakers	General Public Impact	Elite Impact	Policymaking Impact
1. Home health care fraud and abuse ("The Home Health Hustle")	Network television	Single report	Extensive	Yes	Yes	Yes (Symbolic)
2. Assaults against women ("Rape: Every Woman's Nightmare")	Local newspaper	5-part series	Minimal	No	No	Yes (Symbolic)
3. Police brutality ("Beating Justice")	Local television	5-part series	Minimal	Yes	No	Yes (Substantive)
4. Toxic waste disposal ("Wasted Time")	Local television	3-part series	Extensive	No	Yes	Yes (Individualistic)

rape series. Nonetheless, like the police brutality series, the toxic waste investigation resulted in significant changes in the attitudes and actions of *policymakers*. The policymaking impact of the current case is the most focused. It appears to be attributable more to journalistic lobbying with Fire Department officials than to the published investigative reports themselves. This is similar to the developments that occurred in the home health care investigation, where we found that it was not the members of the public who were so aroused by the report that they pressured their representatives to act. Rather, it was the active collaboration between journalists and policymakers during the prepublication phase of investigation that generated the policy outcome. In the two other cases that we studied, no such collaboration occurred, but policy changes nonetheless resulted.

What factors account for these similarities and differences? This question probably has a different answer depending on the target of impact that one wishes to understand—on the public, on elites, or on policy itself. For public attitudes to change, two factors seem to be important—the nature of the media portrayal and the frequency of attention by the media to the issue in the past. When the media portray an issue in an unambiguous way with dramatic, convincing, and clear evidence, public attitudes are more likely to change (see also Tyler and Cook, 1984:706). For example, the police brutality series documented the seriousness of the problem thoroughly, including a statistical analysis of brutality cases against the police and a 5-year review of all lawsuits filed against police in federal courts in Chicago. Its interviews with brutalized victims and action shots of identified "villains" made for powerful drama. In all these respects, the series was most similar to the home health care television report. Both investigations had significant impacts on the public.

On the other hand, like the *Sun–Times* rape series, Channel 5's "Wasted Time" investigation was stylistically ambiguous. Villains and victims were not well-defined. Rather, the television station attributed the problem to "bureaucratic delays," not venal conduct. The harm alleged was more *potential* than actual, and the presentation of the findings contained frequent exceptions and caveats. For example, the second part of the series began with the statement by correspondent Karl that "this is not a scare story of radioactive contamination on the campus of the University of Chicago."[4]

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[4] The script for the series "Wasted Time" is replete with statements that may have limited its impact. It refers repeatedly to the "*potential* for problems," rather than actual problems; it states that "no questions have been raised about the reported levels of radiation in various classrooms . . ."; it defines the source of the problem as "bureaucratic and academic red tape" and "a possible conflict of interest"; and admits that "plans for the structure [that would wipe out the danger] will finally be submitted to the

Moreover, the edge of the toxic waste series' potential impact may have been dulled by the simultaneous presentation of problems and their solution, which created the impression that the danger was under control. The repeated mention that a permanent solution would result from the University's construction of an inexpensive facility (which had already been planned) further circumscribed the scope of the problem.

The equivocal nature of the presentation may help to explain why there was a tendency for posttest anxiety about the problem to be reduced. It may also help to explain why respondents in the exposed groups were somewhat more likely to be " 'confused' [about] news stories about environmental problems, like chemical or toxic wastes. . . ." In sum, the actual importance or seriousness of a problem may be less significant for influencing public attitudes than its "mediated reality" (Nimmo and Combs, 1983).

The second factor that seems important for influencing general public attitudes is the nature of the issue that the media are addressing. Certain issues receive fairly consistent treatment by journalists. Their place on the news media's agenda of interests may be higher or lower at different times, but they regularly tend to be the object of reportorial scrutiny. Examples include news about crime, governmental waste and corruption, and corporate windfall profit making. Borrowing from terminology used in a somewhat different context, we call these topics "recurring issues" in the news (Walker, 1977). Investigative stories about recurring issues have lower impact potential. Media effects are limited by the routine discussion of such issues in news stories, creating an information blur that may obscure the transmission of even unique disclosures. Further, as information is accumulated about a particular issue over time, the effect of subsequent communication tends to diminish (Saltiel and Woelfel, 1975; Downs, 1972). Thus, the impact of investigative reports about rape, toxic waste, and police brutality in Chicago may have been circumscribed by their appearance in the midst of a recurring stream of news events on these subjects.

On the other hand, issues that become the subject of breakthrough news reports have a greater opportunity to produce effects. The home health care report provides an example of a "nonrecurring issue" in the news, one that has received infrequent or no prior attention from journalists. Investigative news stories about such issues have higher

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EPA for approval" (Transcribed Manuscript, "Wasted Time," WMAQ-TV, 13–15 May 1984). When interviewed about the reason for the wording of the script, correspondent Karl stated that "we could only say what we had. I wish we could have made it stronger, but the findings didn't allow it" (Interview by David L. Protess with Peter Karl, 4 June 1984).

impact potential because they reveal matters that may be relatively unknown before their publication. The public's lack of accumulated information on these issues may increase its susceptibility to investigative media messages (Cook et al., 1983), although the effects may not be long-lasting (Watt and van den Berg, 1981; Saltiel and Woelfel, 1975; Downs, 1972).

We would suggest that news media investigative reports with the maximum ability to produce attitude change are those that involve unambiguous presentations of nonrecurring issues. This may explain why the home health care investigation, which spotlighted an "undiscovered" problem by showing greedy agency directors victimizing the elderly and handicapped, had the strongest public impact of the four case studies. Conversely, ambiguously presented reports on recurring issues, like the rape series and toxic waste investigation, have the least opportunity to change public attitudes.

Other types of investigative reports tend to produce in-between cases. The effects of the unambiguous police brutality series may have been delimited by the recurring nature of its subject, at least in Chicago. These kinds of investigative stories may result in significant *attitude* changes on particular items, while falling short of producing a change in the public's *agenda* priorities. We would hypothesize similar "in-between" effects for ambiguously presented, nonrecurring issues. As shown in Figure 1, it is the combination of an issue's "newness" on the media's agenda and its portrayal that may determine the impact of investigative reporting on public attitudes.[5]

Explanations for the effects of news media investigations on policy elites and on policy are more complex and less well understood. Two of the four cases showed effects on elites, and in all four cases, policymaking effects occurred. A review of the four case studies suggests that many factors may influence the nature and extent of governmental responses to investigative reporting. These factors include the timing of the publication in relation to political exigencies, the extent of journalistic collaboration with policymakers, the level of general public and interest group pressures, and the availability of cost-effective solutions to the problems disclosed.

In the toxic waste series, the proximate cause of the initial governmental response was the involvement in the policymaking process of the Channel 5 correspondent. The level of involvement was sufficient

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[5] We recognize that other factors, including audience receptiveness to particular media messages, have been found to explain the differential effects of news stories (Graber, 1984). However, our findings here and in the previous case studies do not show statistically significant differences between respondents with varying degrees of attentiveness to the investigative reports or with differing demographic characteristics. The effects of these and other factors will be examined further in future field experiments.

Frequency of Past Media Attention	Media Portrayal of Issues	
	Unambiguous	Ambiguous
Non-recurring	STRONG EFFECTS (e.g., "Home Health Hustle")	MODERATE EFFECTS (e.g., early Watergate coverage)
Recurring	MODERATE EFFECTS (e.g., "Beating Justice")	WEAK EFFECTS (e.g., "Rape..." & "Wasted Time")

Figure 1. A Typology of the Effects of Investigative Reports on Public Attitudes[6]

to prompt an immediate effort to correct the specific problem at the University of Chicago. Likewise in the home health care case, the policy impact (legislation hearings and proposals for change) resulted from the active collaboration between journalists and policymakers (i.e., high-level staff members of the Senate Permanent Investigations Subcommittee).

In the other two cases, journalists did not orchestrate the policy impacts. In the rape study, we found that the series provided a platform for those already pushing for reform of rape legislation. Policymakers who already had proposals and programs ready to recommend before the series made their announcements soon after publication of the series, using the investigative report as a backdrop for their announcements.

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[6] We do not yet have an experimental case study from our own work to enter as an example for the "moderate effects" cell shown in Figure 1. An example found elsewhere may be the journalistic investigation of Watergate in the first months after the break-in at the Democratic National Committee headquarters in June 1972. One explanation for the lack of media impact of Watergate coverage during this time is that it was a "high threshold" issue that failed to receive sufficiently widespread attention and credibility (Lang and Lang, 1983). Our model and analyses reported elsewhere (Molotch, Protess, and Gordon, 1985) suggest a possible alternative explanation for the lack of agenda-setting effects. The focus of the journalistic disclosures in 1972 was on the highly complicated flow of campaign funds. While the gross misuse of Republican party political contributions (including the funding of the Watergate burglary) was certainly nonrecurring news, the dry stylistic content of the stories and distance from their ultimate presidential target may have limited the potential to reorder the public's agenda priorities. Such stories may be aberrations in the field of investigative reporting, where journalists often make concerted efforts to at least portray their findings as tangible and obtrusive even if the actual issues they are covering are symbolic and unobtrusive (Mollenhoff, 1981; Anderson, 1976).

In the police brutality study, the series also provided a platform but in a different way from that described above. The investigative report's results were used by Chicago mayoral challenger Harold Washington as ammunition against incumbent Mayor Jane Byrne, who had appointed the police superintendent. When elected, Washington was responsible for many of the policy changes in the police department.

Do investigative reports always result in some form of policy response? Investigative reports uncover problems in the social fabric of society. Officials directly responsible for the particular domain in which a problem is uncovered may feel obligated to take some action to show they are "responsive" and "responsible." Since our cases are small in number and are not necessarily representative of all investigative reports, we cannot generalize. However, the results to date suggest that investigative reports may have more influence than previously thought. The evidence that such reports present about social conditions serves to put policymakers on the defensive. They must either attempt to justify the problem or act to solve it. Actions—symbolic, individualistic, or substantive—are the responses seen in the cases analyzed here.

The web of influences that affect the policymaking process is intricate and variable, as are the conditions for public attitude formation. Additional case studies are necessary to identify other influential factors, and to build and refine additional models of influence. As we continue to examine investigative reporting, we will try to understand further the link between media messages, the nature of the problems that are revealed, and the opinion and policy responses to them.

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THE POLLS—A Review

THE USE OF PUBLIC OPINION DATA BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S COMMISSION ON PORNOGRAPHY

TOM W. SMITH

As part of its general analysis of social and behavior science research on pornography, the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography examined public attitudes toward pornography and how they have changed since the report of the earlier Commission on Obscenity and Pornography in 1970. They examined the social science literature on pornography "in recognition of the role it plays in determining legal standards and social policy" and studied "public opinion on pornography to systematically describe the nature of public perceptions of and experiences with such materials as well as policy preferences" (Commission, 1986: 901, 902).[1] The importance of assessing public opinion in regard to pornography was also made clear in reference to the formulation and implementation of the "contemporary community standards" rule established in *Miller vs. California* (1973) (Commission, 1986:240–275). In its review of public opinion on pornography, the Commission focused on three areas: "(1) public exposure to sexually explicit materials; (2) perceptions of the effects of pornography; and (3) opinions on the regulation of pornography" (Commission, 1986:912). While paying some attention to the distribution of opinion among the population as a whole and to subgroup differences by gender and age, the Commission focused in particular on how opinions changed from 1970 to 1985 (Commission, 1986: 910, 912, 937).

This review examines the Commission's analysis of public opinion data, points out certain weaknesses and limitations in their report, and presents additional data and analysis on trends in public opinion on pornography.

TOM W. SMITH is senior study director at the National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago. I would like to thank William Kruskal, Roger Tourangeau, and Howard Schuman for their comments.

[1] For brevity, we will cite Attorney General's Commission on Pornography: Final Report as "Commission, 1986," in text.

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The Commission's analysis of public opinion on pornography is marred by several factors. The most serious of these are (1) inappropriate comparisons between variant samples and question wordings, (2) omitting statistical tests of significance when comparing survey results, and (3) failure to use the best available data.

Inappropriate Comparisons

The Commission is sensitive to the problem of comparing samples and questions that are not fully comparable (Commission, 1986: 912, 915, 924), but at several points abandons its self-counsel and makes comparisons that are methodologically untenable and therefore substantively questionable. The following examples illustrate the range of problems encountered in the Commission's Report.

GEBHARD'S STUDY ON THE ACQUISITION OF BASIC SEX INFORMATION

The Commission cites Gebhard's (1977) study on age and source of initial information about various sexual matters such as intercourse, pregnancy, and sexually transmitted diseases. Gebhard concluded that people were learning about sexual matters at an earlier age and that informational sources have changed. Gebhard's conclusions are based on a comparison of Kinsey data collected between 1938 and 1960 for whites with some college education and a convenience sample (N = 114) of undergraduates from a single university in 1975. Since the original Kinsey data represent a series of convenience samples accumulated in various ways from sundry groups over two decades (Cochran, Mostellar, and Tukey, 1954; Benson and Bentley, 1957; Wallin, 1949), they hardly offer a basis of comparison to anything, much less to a small convenience sample from a single university. The Commission is aware of the problematic nature of the comparisons and notes, "These results, however, are simply suggestive because of the difficulty of generalizing beyond these particular groups of respondents and the limited size of the 1975 sample" (pp. 915–916).

We have no strong quarrel with the Commission's handling of this particular comparison since they do qualify its findings and note its inadequacies,[2] but given the weakness of the original study we wonder if the results were worth citing at all and in particular worth a full page of discussion.

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[2] However, in the summary (Commission, 1986:937) the qualifications shrink to "sexual knowledge *appears* to be acquired at younger ages" (emphasis added).

TRENDS IN READING "PORNOGRAPHIC" MAGAZINES

As a general rule for comparing similar, but not identical questions, the Commission (1986:912) formulated the following rule:

> [W]here questions were examining similar issues but were not worded the same, only the questions which were more narrowly defined for the 1985 survey were included and any resulting error would be on the side of conservativism.

By this the Commission means that if the 1985 measure would measure lower levels of a behavior or less affect toward an object because of its phrasing compared to the 1970 question *and* the 1985 levels still exceeded the 1970 levels, then the observed difference between 1970 and 1985 would indicate that change had occurred and would underestimate the magnitude of the change.[3] The Commission applies their subset comparison rule to the following questions from the 1970 and 1985 surveys:

1970: During the past year, have you seen or read a magazine which you regarded as pornographic?

1985: Have you *ever* read *Playboy* magazine or *Penthouse* magazine?

Please tell me if the following apply to you or not?

- Sometimes buy or read magazines like *Playboy*.
- Sometimes buy or read magazines like *Hustler*.

The Commission notes that 20% reported reading a "pornographic magazine" in 1970, while "In contrast, two thirds of the 1985 respondents had read *Playboy* or *Penthouse* at some time" (p. 913). The Commission applies its subset comparison rule and draws the conclusion that exposure to sexually explicit magazines increased from 1970 to 1985. They note, "this is a loose comparison, only afforded by the fact that the 1985 question is more specific in nature and, therefore, a more conservative estimate'' (p. 913).

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[3] More formally, if we have set AB that consists of subsets A and B and if we have a measure of subset B at Time 2 and it shows more members than a measurement of set AB at Time 1, then it is possible to state with assurance that set AB has grown between Time 1 and Time 2 since even if subset A reduced to zero set AB is greater at Time 2 than at Time 1 since subset B by itself is greater than the total of set AB at Time 1. Now this procedure only works when the subsets are exclusively part of the larger set, that is, all A and all B are in set AB. In addition, we are assured of a clear interpretation of change only when the smaller subset exceeds the larger set. If not, we are left with no clear inference about change unless other assumptions are made. For example, *if* we assume that the ratio of A : B is the same at Time 2 as it was at Time 1, then we could estimate the incidence of AB at Time 2 with only information on the incidence of A *or* B at Time 2 and thus estimate how AB compares at Time 1 and Time 2. This would of course rest on an unproven assumption.

But the Commission is wrong on this point. First, the 1970 question refers to the ''past year'' while the 1985 question refers to ''ever.'' The 1985 question clearly covers a longer time span than the 1970 question and therefore is not a subset of the former and the subset comparison rule cannot apply. Nor do the separate questions about *Playboy* and *Hustler* provide an appropriate base of comparison. They refer to a vague ''sometimes'' rather than the past year.[4]

Even if the time frames were the same, it is unlikely that the 1985 questions would refer to a subset of the 1970 question. Many people may not consider ''*Playboy* magazine or *Penthouse* magazine'' or even ''magazines like *Hustler*'' to be pornographic. For example, in 1970 readers of ''magazines like *Playboy*'' may well have responded in the negative to the 1970 ''pornographic'' question.[5]

Also, we cannot be at all sure of the differential impact on reporting of mentioning specific magazines (*Playboy, Penthouse, Hustler*) as compared to an abstract categorization such as ''a magazine which you regarded as pornographic.'' It is likely that these two forms of questioning would trigger different cognitive processing and therefore result in differences in the response distributions.

Overall, for the above reasons, it is impossible to draw any conclusions on trends in reading sexually explicit magazines from the above two surveys.

TRENDS IN THE REGULATION OF MOVIES AND MAGAZINES

The Commission also compared questions from the 1970 and 1985 surveys on the governmental regulation of sexually explicit movies and magazines. The wordings are as follows:

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[4] The Commission never fully cites the wordings of the 1970 and 1985 questions. This may have contributed to their inappropriate comparisons. In addition their discussion does not clearly distinguish between the two 1985 questions.

[5] The 1970 report (Abelson et al., 1971:23) notes that people saying yes to the pornographic magazine questions named a ''substantial number'' of ''general or special interest magazines of wide distribution'' and the list they give includes many that would not be judged as ''pornographic'' by most people and most objective standards (e.g., *Good Housekeeping, Ladies Home Journal, Life, Look, McCall's, Reader's Digest, Vogue*). As they noted, ''the range of content embodied in what different people consider pornographic appears to be extremely wide.'' However, they lack any information on what magazines people had read but did *not* consider as pornographic. We suspect that many people reading sexually oriented magazines such as *Playboy* may have not classified their reading material as ''pornographic.'' We suspect that there is a high degree of individual variation in interpretation of the term ''pornographic'' in the context of this question.

1970: On the top of this card are descriptions of sexual material sometimes shown in movies in regular theaters. On the bottom of the card are some opinions about who it is all right to admit to movies showing such material.

For each description on top tell me which, if any, group on the bottom it is right to admit to these movies.

Let's start with Number 1. Which statement comes closest to your opinion about who it is all right to admit to these movies? Just tell me the letter.

1. Scenes which are mainly for the purpose of showing the sex organs of a man or a woman.
2. Mouth–sex organ contact between a man and a woman.
3. A man or a woman having (or appearing to have) sexual intercourse.
4. Sexual activities between people of the same sex.
5. Sex activities which include whips, belts, or spankings.

A. None—there is no one it is all right to admit.
B. It is all right to admit people like me but not others.
C. It is all right to admit adults 21 and over but not persons under 21.
D. It is all right to admit persons 16 or older but not persons under 16.
E. It is all right to admit anyone who wishes to be admitted.

1985: For each item that I read, tell me, if you feel it should be *totally banned* for sale to adults, sold to adults as long as there is *no public* display, or should be sold to adults with *no restrictions*.

Magazines that show nudity
Magazines that show adults having sexual relations
Magazines that show sexual violence
Theater showings of X-rated movies
Theater showings of movies that depict sexual violence
Sale or rental of X-rated video cassettes for home viewing
Sale or rental of video cassettes featuring sexual violence

The Commission (1985:923–924) concludes that "while some of the categories between 1970 and 1985 are not directly comparable, a reasonable comparison can be made for the category describing depictions of sexual intercourse." They assert that the percent favoring no restrictions on magazines depicting sexual intercourse rose from 4% in 1970 to 12% in 1985. Similarly, the percent favoring no restrictions for movies rose from 4% to 20%. They add the qualification that "The assumption we make here, of course, is that most respondents associate X-rated movies with depictions of sexual intercourse, but these comparisons are made with this caveat in mind."

The Commission should have had more caveats in mind. The questions are so different in form that it is hard to describe the multitude of ways in which they vary, and we cite only some major differences. First, the 1970 wording talks of "who it is all right to admit to movies." It does not directly refer to any governmental/community restrictions to enforce such preferences of respondents and we cannot be at all sure that respondents thought in terms of such regulations. The 1985 question on the other hand refers to having the object "totally banned . . . no public display . . . no restrictions," a formulation that at least strongly implies government action. Second, even assuming that respondents in both years are referring to legal restrictions, the phrasing of the questions is quite different. In an approximate fashion, the difference between these questions resembles the classic distinction between the forbid/allow questions (Schuman and Presser, 1981; Hippler and Schwarz, 1986). Studies show that questions asking about "forbidding" an activity usually produce dramatically different results than do questions asking about "allowing" the same activity (i.e., the percent wanting to "forbid" the activity is usually much lower, typically 15%–25% lower, than the percent "not allowing" the same thing). The difference in these questions between "all right to admit" and "should totally ban . . . or impose no restrictions" are both different enough from one another and similar enough to the forbid/allow examples to warn that similar wording effects could be present. Third, what the Commission counts as the "No Restrictions" option in 1970 (option E) clearly implies that children under 16 would be allowed to view the movies and magazines in question, while in the 1985 question the "No Restriction" option explicitly refers to selling only to *adults*. Numerous other differences totally mar any possible comparison of these questions, but those listed above are sufficient to document the problem.

CHANGES IN COMMUNITY STANDARDS

The Commission (1986:924) compared nearly identical questions asked by Gallup on community standards in 1977 and 1985:

> Do you think the standards in your [1977: this] community regarding the sale of sexually explicit material should be stricter than they are now, not as strict or kept as they are now?

	1977	1985
Should be stricter	45%	43%
Kept as now	35	48
Should be less strict	6	4
Don't know	14	5

They draw the following conclusion from the above data. "There were as many who indicated standards should be stricter in 1977 as in 1985—forty-five percent versus forty-three percent." This analysis is correct as far as it goes, but it completely ignores the large and statistically significant ($p < .001$, see note 9 below) increase in the "Kept as now" category which rose by 13 percentage points and the moderately large drop in the "Don't know" category. There are several ways to interpret this switch. Taken at its face value, it suggests that more people made up their minds about this issue and that this group as well as small segments of both extremes (the stricter and less strict groups) moved toward the middle and the status quo. However, the atypically large shift in levels of "Don't know" may signal some measurement artifact, perhaps a result of the shift from personal interviewing in 1977 to telephone interviewing in 1985.[6]

A second aspect of this question important to its evaluation is that it asks people to express their satisfaction with what they perceive to be current community standards. The judgment is a relative, not an absolute expression. For example, if community standards (e.g., laws and law enforcement practices) were actually becoming stricter *and* thereby conforming more closely to preexisting public opinion, then the percentage saying stricter would decrease and the percent saying about right would increase. This shift would not indicate that people were more permissive on pornography, but only that the community standards had come into greater accord with the standards of more of the citizenry.

The possible relationship between community standards and standards of the community as expressed by a sample of citizens is both complex and controversial (Herrman and Bordner, 1983; Wallace, 1973). We simply note that several things could be changing—most notably, the objective standards of the community, the popular perception of these standards, and the popular evaluation of whether the standards are or are not strict enough—and with this question it is impossible to know which of these elements is changing.

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[6] Item nonresponse levels are sensitive to various measurement artifacts and in particular to house effects (Smith, 1978, 1982). However, the DK level for telephone interviews has not usually been found to differ greatly from personal interviews and usually tends to be slightly higher on telephone interviews than in person (Smith, 1984).

CHANGES IN PERCEPTIONS OF PORNOGRAPHY'S EFFECTS

The Commission (1986:932–933) compared questions asked in 1970 and in 1985 regarding perceptions of the effects of sexually explicit material:

1970: On this card are some opinions about the effects of looking at or reading sexual materials. As I read the letter of each one please tell me if you think sexual materials *do* or *do not* have these effects. Let's start with letter a.

a. Sexual materials provide entertainment
b. Sexual materials make people bored with sexual materials
c. Sexual materials provide an outlet for bottled up impulses
d. Sexual materials make people sex crazy
e. Sexual materials give relief to people who have sex problems
f. Sexual materials lead to a breakdown of morals
g. Sexual materials improve sexual relations of some married couples
h. Sexual materials provide information about sex
i. Sexual materials excite people sexually
j. Sexual materials lead people to commit rape
k. Sexual materials lead people to lose respect for women
l. Sexual materials make men want to do new things with their wives

1985: Thinking of sexually explicit magazines, movies, video cassettes, and books, tell me if you believe the following are true or not true:

a. They provide information about sex
b. They lead some people to commit rape or sexual violence
c. They provide a safe outlet for people with sexual problems
d. They lead some people to lose respect for women
e. They can help improve the sex lives of some couples
f. They provide entertainment
g. They lead to a breakdown of morals

In comparing these two questions the Commission felt it was on solid ground, noting that the "1970 and 1985 data in this case were directly comparable since the same categories of effects were used" (p. 932) and the "item choices provided the 1970 respondents were worded in the same way or were reasonably similar" (p. 933). They conclude that several notable changes occurred in the public perceptions of the effects of sexually explicit materials and stress the increases in the percent believing that these materials lead to less respect for women (43%

in 1970 to 76% in 1985) and more sexually motivated violence toward women (49% in 1970 to 73% in 1985) (Commission, 1986:933, 937).

But once again the Commission is off the track. First, the 1970 question refers only to "looking at or reading sexual materials" while the 1985 question mentions sexually explicit magazines, movies, video cassettes, and books." It is unclear whether the 1970 question covers both written and audio-video presentations. The inclusion of movies depends on whether respondents interpreted "seeing" as including films. Also, the 1970 question refers to "sexual" materials while the 1985 question uses the term "sexually explicit." In both cases, the 1970 question offers a weaker stimulus, probably not including movies in the minds of many respondents and perhaps also making respondents think of a less provocative range of materials. Second, several of the compared categories differ in notable and biasing ways between surveys. The item on respect for women (k in 1970, and d in 1985) is significantly qualified by the insertion of the word "some." It is obviously much easier to agree to the 1985 wording with this qualification than the 1970 wording that implies "most" or "in general." The item on rape or sexual violence is compromised in a similar fashion. Moreover, the addition of the phrase "or sexual violence" probably makes it easier to agree with the 1985 wording. Since in both cases the question is easier to answer in the affirmative in its 1985 version, it is not possible to interpret the increase in percentages as representing true change for these highlighted questions. Notable changes also occurred on the items about relief from sexual problems (1970e and 1985c) and improved sex relations for couples (1970g and 1985e).

In sum, virtually every over-time comparison that the Commission carried out is extremely suspect, suffering from serious incompatibility of questions and other measurement variations.

Significance Testing

In none of the comparisons across time or across age and sex subgroups did the Commission apply tests of statistical significance to see if the differences could be inferred as resulting from the true variation rather than chance differences arising from sampling variation. This neglect occurs even though the Commission elsewhere questions research findings that failed to apply such tests (p. 153, n. 25)[7] and showed an awareness of the rudiments of applying such tests to surveys (p. 911, n. 1119, and p. 925, n. 1120). None of their comparisons, including those that refer to "significant" differences or changes (e.g., pp. 923, 932) appear to have been subjected to appropriate tests of statistical significance and the conclusions are suspect on this ground.

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[7] This call for tests of significance comes in the individual Commissioner statements section in a piece by Father Bruce Ritter, "Nonviolent, sexually explicit material and sexual violence."

Other Data, More and Better Evidence

The Commission failed to include in their report a large part of the existent public opinion data, ignored data that they had in their possession, and, as a result, in a number of instances failed to present the best evidence available on the issues they examined.

In its report the Commission primarily used the 1970 survey conducted for the earlier Commission on Obscenity and Pornography (Abelson et al., 1971) and the 1985 *Newsweek*/Gallup survey ("The war against pornography," 1985). Some use was also made of two questions from a 1977 Gallup survey and one question from a 1986 *Washington Post*/Associated Press poll. In addition, the Commission cited data from a survey in Canada (Check, 1985) and the Gebhard (1977) study noted earlier. This inventory of surveys and questions represents only a small fraction of recent survey questions on the topic of pornography. As of 15 September 1986, the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research listed 96 questions appearing in national, United States surveys and catalogued under the subject "pornography."[8] Many of these questions dealt with the very topics that the Commission chose to focus on in their review of public opinion data.

TRENDS IN VIEWING X-RATED MOVIES

The Commission noted that "The marked difference between the questions asked at both time points [1970 and 1985] precludes any conclusion about any increase or decrease in film viewing in the last fifteen years" (p. 914). Table 1 shows however that information does exist on this trend. Item A, on having viewed an X-rated movie in the last year, shows a nonconstant, nonlinear trend,[9] with viewing monotonically

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[8] As determined by using the computerized POLL (Public Opinion Locating Library) system. See also "A pornography report" (1986).

[9] The statistical procedures applied here are described in detail in Taylor (1980). In brief, the procedure tries to model trend data by testing constant and linear fits to the observations. There are four possible outcomes of these tests: (1) constant, (2) significant linear component, (3) significant linear trend, and (4) nonconstant, nonlinear. The constant model is accepted when there is no significant variation from the constant or pooled proportion. The significant linear component model is accepted when (*a*) the constant model is rejected and (*b*) the linear model is also rejected, but (*c*) the linear model is a significant improvement over the constant model. The significant linear model is ac-

Table 1. Trends in Viewing Sexually Explicit Movies

A. Have you seen an X-rated movie in the last year?[a]	1973	1975	1976	1978	1980	1983	1984	1986
Yes (%)	25.4	18.9	18.2	15.0	16.0	19.6	23.6	24.8
(*N*)	(1491)	(1482)	(1492)	(1524)	(1462)	(1588)	(1464)	(1460)

B. Ever seen an X-rated movie?[b]	10/1971	3/1977	4–5/1977
Yes	39.0%	33.9%	45%
No	57.2	64.6	54
Don't know, no answer	3.9	1.5	1
(*N*)	(1499)	(1507)	(2002)

[a] Data from the General Social Survey (GSS) of NORC. Surveys conducted in February/April of each year. "Don't knows" and "no answers" are excluded from the base. For full details see Davis and Smith (1986).

[b] For 1971: Now here is a list of a number of things. Would you read down the list and for each one tell me whether you have ever done it or not? You can just read the number and the answer "Yes" or "No."

1. Won a prize in a contest or lottery.
2. Been interviewed in a poll (before today).
3. Worn a wig.
4. Grown a mustache or beard.
5. Dyed your hair.
6. Been held at gun or knife point.
7. Spent the night in jail.
8. Smoked marijuana.
9. Gone swimming nude or "skinny dipping" with a mixed group.
10. Gone to an X-rated movie.
11. Been to a psychiatrist.
12. Ridden on a motorcycle.
    (Roper Commercial #524)

For 3/1977: Have you ever happened to have seen an X-rated movie? (Gallup, AIPO #969)
For 4–5/1977: Have you ever seen an X-rated movie? (Roper Report 77-5)

dropping from 1973 to 1978 and then rising in a similar fashion from 1978 to 1986. Both the 1973–1978 decline and the 1978–1986 increase are significant linear trends (– 1.95 percentage points per annum from 1973 to 1978 and + 1.31 percentage points per annum from 1978 to 1986). It is widely believed (but not testable with this question) that the decline from 1973 to 1978 resulted from changes in the application of the movie rating system during this period. While the "X" designation originally applied to such major motion pictures as *Last Tango in Paris* (1972) and *Midnight Cowboy* (1969), since the mid-seventies it has been used almost exclusively for sexually explicit movies aimed at the adult-theater trade. The rise since 1978 is generally associated with the increase in the homeviewing of X-rated movies on VCRs.

Item B on Table 1, on ever having seen X-rated movies, illustrates the problem of using variant wordings. A comparison of the October 1971 point with the March 1977 point shows a significant *decline* (p = .01)[10] of 0.8 percentage points per annum. Using the October 1971 and the April/May 1977 points shows a significant (p = .002) *increase* of 1.0 percentage points per annum. The reason for this disagreement over even the *direction* of change is that the two 1977 points differ significantly ($p < .001$). This large difference underscores the danger of working with variant wordings and demonstrates that no meaningful inference about trends in X-rated viewing can be drawn from these variants.

TRENDS IN ATTITUDES TOWARD GOVERNMENT REGULATION OF PORNOGRAPHY

The Commission concluded on the basis of its comparison of the 1970 and 1985 surveys that public permissiveness toward pornography had increased over the last decade and a half. Table 2 presents three time series that question that conclusion. From 1973 to 1986 there was no

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cepted when (*a*) the constant model is rejected, and (*b*) there is no significant variation from the best linear fit. The nonconstant, nonlinear model is accepted when (*a*) the constant model is rejected, (*b*) the linear model is rejected, and (*c*) the improvement between the constant and linear models is not significant. Slopes for the linear fit are expressed in changes in percentage points per annum.

[10] Rather than use the SRS (simple random sample) assumptions, we adjust the sampling variance by 1.3 to account for the design effects arising from the multistage cluster designs used by national personal interviews. The 1.3 design effect was based on studies of the GSS in 1975–76 and 1983, and we do not know the actual design effect of other surveys. They may have design effects greater or less than this figure. In every case the data were analyzed using both SRS assumptions and this 1.3 design effect adjustment, and there were no substantial or substantive changes in conclusions.

change in the percentages favoring "laws against the distribution of pornography whatever the age," but there was a significant linear decline in the percentages favoring "no laws forbidding the distribution of pornography" (0.5 percentage points per annum). For the period of 1975 to 1982, the question on a government crackdown also shows a complex pattern. Overall, the trend is nonconstant and nonlinear. Support for a crackdown rises rapidly from 1975 to 1977 and then falls between 1977 and 1982. If we look only at the two end points (1975 and 1982), we find a significant decline in disagreement with a government crackdown. This trend is butressed by the significant ($p = .002$) shift between 1976 and 1982 in approval of banning pornographic bookstores from residential shopping areas. In brief, there are at least three time series with identically worded questions on various aspects of government regulation of pornography that the Commission could have drawn upon. If they had done so, they would probably have come to the conclusion that support for government regulation of pornography rose from the mid-seventies to the mid-eighties.

TRENDS IN PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF THE EFFECTS OF PORNOGRAPHY

The Commission also failed to utilize the single best available time series measuring public opinion on pornography's impact. Modeled after the original question of the Commission on Obscenity and Pornography, the General Social Survey has tracked public attitudes on this topic from 1973 to 1986.[11] Changes have not been large, but for each effect, we find a significant linear trend (see Table 3). The two items that clearly referred to negative effects show increasing belief that pornography is associated with these results. Agreement that pornography breaks down morals rose 0.8 percentage points per annum, while the belief that it leads people to commit rape increased by 0.4 percentage points per annum. The one clear positive impact of pornography, that it provides information about sex, declined by 0.3 percentage points per annum. The final effect, that pornography provides "an outlet for the bottled-up impulses," was originally classified by the earlier Commission (Abelson et al., 1971:53) as a "socially desirable" effect, but we suspect that many people probably see it as negative. They probably consider it an inappropriate "outlet" in the same sense

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[11] These items are much closer to the original 1970 survey items than the 1985 items, but there are enough differences to possibly compromise comparisons between the 1970 survey and the 1973–1986 series. For that reason, we have restricted our analysis to the later series.

Table 2. Trends on Government Regulation of Pornography

A. Which of these statements comes closest to your feeling about pornography laws?
There should be laws against the distribution of pornography whatever the age.
There should be laws against the distribution of pornography to persons under 18.
There should be no laws forbidding the distribution of pornography.

	1973	1975	1976	1978	1980	1983	1984	1986
Laws whatever the age	41.8%	40.4%	40.0%	43.2%	40.3%	41.1%	40.6%	42.6%
Laws for under 18	47.1	47.6	49.8	48.5	51.4	53.1	54.0	52.8
No laws	9.2	10.7	8.1	7.3	6.1	4.5	4.2	3.6
Don't know	1.9	1.2	2.1	1.0	2.2	1.3	1.2	1.0
(*N*)	(1498)	(1489)	(1496)	(1531)	(1468)	(1595)	(1464)	(1469)

SOURCE: GSS, NORC. For full details see Davis and Smith (1986).

B. A number of controversial proposals are being discussed these days. I'd like you to tell me for each one whether you strongly agree with it, partially agree with it, or disagree with it.

The government should crack down more on pornography in movies, books, and nightclubs.

	5/1975	1/1976	7/1977	6/1982
Strongly agree	45%	47%	56%	50%
Partially agree	19	22	20	22
Disagree	36	32	24	28
(*N*)	(1014)	(951)	(1044)	(1010)

SOURCE: Data from Yankelovich, Skelly, and White for *Time*. "Don't knows" or "no answers" excluded from the base. Surveys conducted by telephone. For details contact the Roper Center, University of Connecticut.

C. Here is a list of laws that have been proposed. Would you read down that list and for each tell me whether you would be for or against such a law?

A law banning pornographic book stores in residential shopping areas.

	12/1976	7/1982
For	70%	75%
Against	25	23
Don't know	5	3
(*N*)	(2000)	(2000)

SOURCE: Data from the Roper Organization. Surveys were conducted in person. For details contact the Roper Center, University of Connecticut.

Table 3. Trends in Perception of Pornographic Material

The next questions are about pornography—books, magazines, and photographs that show or describe sex activity.

	1973	1975	1976	1978	1980	1983	1984	1986
A. Sexual materials provide information about sex:								
Has effects	61.9%	62.2%	56.5%	61.4%	58.3%	59.9%	57.6%	57.0%
Doesn't have	32.6	29.2	36.4	32.6	34.4	35.1	37.4	37.9
Don't know	5.5	8.5	7.0	6.0	7.3	5.0	5.1	5.1
(*N*)	(1499)	(1486)	(1493)	(1529)	(1465)	(1591)	(1463)	(1466)
B. Sexual materials lead to breakdown of morals:								
Has effects	52.9%	51.4%	55.0%	56.9%	60.3%	58.7%	61.8%	62.2%
Doesn't have	41.5	39.5	37.6	38.0	32.6	36.1	33.1	32.5
Don't know	5.6	9.0	7.4	5.1	7.0	5.2	5.1	5.3
(*N*)	(1500)	(1487)	(1490)	(1529)	(1461)	(1589)	(1462)	(1463)
C. Sexual materials lead people to commit rape:								
Has effects	50.0%	52.0%	52.7%	56.7%	54.0%	55.4%	55.1%	56.8%
Doesn't have	42.9	37.9	38.1	35.9	36.8	37.5	37.1	36.3
Don't know	7.0	10.0	9.1	7.3	9.2	7.1	7.8	6.9
(*N*)	(1495)	(1484)	(1492)	(1528)	(1462)	(1589)	(1462)	(1461)
D. Sexual materials provide an outlet for bottled-up impulses:								
Has effects	54.7%	56.3%	55.6%	58.9%	59.2%	57.4%	60.6%	59.5%
Doesn't have	35.2	27.8	28.6	29.1	26.9	31.5	27.3	30.6
Don't know	10.1	15.9	15.8	12.0	14.0	11.1	12.1	9.9
(*N*)	(1499)	(1485)	(1491)	(1527)	(1462)	(1588)	(1463)	(1462)

Source: GSS, NORC. For full details see Davis and Smith (1986).

that getting drunk might be an outlet for bottled-up stress.[12] In any event, belief in this effect increased by 0.4 percentage points per annum. If we consider the trend in the outlet item as uninstructive because of its ambiguous nature, we find a consistent pattern that the public has become less sanguine about the effects of pornography.

In sum, the Commission's analysis of trends was greatly weakened by its failure to utilize time series that are readily available from public data archives, widely employed in the social science literature,[13] and even known to the Commission's staff.[14]

Conclusion

The Commission's analysis of public opinion toward pornography is seriously flawed. It rested on a series of comparisons between variant wordings that provide little useful insight, since true change and measurement variations are completely confounded. While the Commission expressed wariness about the use of variant questions, they repeatedly proceeded to make inappropriate comparisons. Second, their analysis ignored statistical tests for significance. This makes both their subgroup and time-trend analysis problematic. Third, they either were unaware of or ignored relevant time series that employed consistent wordings and would have provided a solid empirical base for their analysis of recent trends. For these and related reasons,[15] the Commission's analysis of public opinion is methodologically unsound and therefore substantively suspect.

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[12] The ambiguous nature of this item is shown by the fact that it positively associates both with negative items (gamma = .409 with rape and .274 with moral breakdown) and the positive item (.373 with information). It has no association with gender, viewing X-rated movies, or regulating pornography, while the clear negative and positive items have associations with these items that are opposite in sign.

[13] For uses of various items appearing in Tables 1–3, see Klenow and Crane, 1977; Taylor and Smith, 1978; Jelen, 1986; Stephan and McMullin, 1982; Wood and Hughes, 1984; Grassel, 1980; Koch and Davidson, 1985; Peek, 1985a, 1985b; Peek, Brown, and Witt, 1978; Peek, Grassel, and Reid, 1980; Reiss, 1981, 1986; and Rushing, Garibay, and Grassel, 1979.

[14] The Commission requested from NORC the GSS data on pornography and was sent same (Edna F. Einsiedel, personal communications, 16 May 1985 and 6 June 1985).

[15] Among other problems in the Commission's handling of public opinion data, we cite as examples the following: (1) sample size is not given for the 1977 Gallup survey (p. 931), (2) sample sizes are not given for subgroups (pp. 919–921, 928–930), (3) errors (generally small) appear in reporting the wordings of various questions (e.g., the mediums listed in Table 4, p. 926 are shortened approximations and "sex" not "sexual" is actually used in the same question), (4) question wordings are not reported for some items (e.g., pp. 920, 921), and (5) there are several careless errors in citing sources.

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THE POLLS—A Report

EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL WELFARE

ROBERT Y. SHAPIRO
KELLY D. PATTERSON
JUDITH RUSSELL AND
JOHN T. YOUNG

Government assistance in providing jobs is an area of social welfare policy of great interest and concern, but the government has not been very active in it since the days of public works projects during the New Deal and to a lesser extent since the job-training and manpower projects of the 1960s and 1970s (cf. Baumer and Van Horn, 1985). The larger economic issue of employment policy and planning has received even less attention as well (e.g., Osterman, 1986); in fact, the lack of attention to it by pollsters suggests that it is not often debated in the media and consequently among the public. In contrast, unemployment compensation is a visible and important social welfare benefit involving sizable expenditures, and debates about it have dealt with the extension of benefits. In this case, the lack of questions asked by pollsters almost certainly reflects a favorable public consensus toward this assistance. The public, to be sure, has been concerned less about the amount spent on unemployment payments than about actions directed toward unemployment itself—with the degree of their concern depending upon the magnitude and duration of unemployment (versus inflation and other economic problems) and the economic status and other characteristics of citizens whose opinions are examined (cf. Schiltz, 1970; Erskine, 1975; Feagan, 1975; De Boer, 1983; Hibbs, 1979).

Since the New Deal, there has been a recurring policy debate about

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This is the fourth in a series of articles on public opinion and social welfare policy. ROBERT Y. SHAPIRO is Assistant Professor of Political Science at Columbia University and a NORC Research Associate. KELLY D. PATTERSON, JUDITH RUSSELL, and JOHN T. YOUNG are doctoral students in Political Science at Columbia. The authors thank Tom Smith and Sasha Heid for their comments and assistance. Support has been provided by the Ford Foundation Project on Social Welfare Policy and the American Future and by the Columbia University Council for Research in the Social Sciences; the responsibility for analysis and interpretation is the authors'.

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whether "welfare" or "relief" should involve work and, if needed, jobs that the government itself would help provide. For reasons having to do with the work ethic and American values (cf. McClosky and Zaller, 1984; Shapiro et al., 1987), there has always been overwhelming support for work in place of welfare, but the public has disliked the limited amount of productive work that some public jobs seem to entail.

The public consensus is a broadly sweeping and vague preference in search of a viable policy. This has provided an opportunity for leadership and policy innovation that has not been seized upon since Roosevelt's action and rhetoric during the Great Depression (although at the time this article was written, state governors, Congress, and the Reagan administration were appearing to move toward a consensus on employment as a substitute for welfare). The one difference, to be sure, in contrast to today's higher level of structural unemployment, was that Roosevelt was able to treat employment programs as temporary policies until the economy picked up—which it did, as a result of World War II.

An active employment policy—not just education and job training, which have had considerable public support, despite occasional reports of abuses in programs such as CETA (the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act)—has yet to be viewed as a long-term *prevention* and *planning* strategy to eliminate dependency and to facilitate long-term growth by paying short-term costs (cf. Kirchheimer, 1986). There has been no shortage of work-related proposals for dealing with the problems faced and posed by the "underclass" (e.g., Kaus, 1986, and his critics), and given the levels of support for providing jobs—even in the abstract—it is noteworthy that this preference has had such little impact on public policy since 1960.

According to the survey data, there is apparently substantial variation in responses depending upon how questions are phrased concerning government's role "in making sure that people who want to work have jobs" and depending upon context effects. Employment is much less thought of as an entitlement than Social Security or medical care. The public clearly has mixed feelings about government-provided public service or public works projects, in which the government is the active employer of last resort. On the other hand, the public tends to support limited proposals such as having the government provide productive work or training and education for young adults, and proposals that only vaguely describe guarantees of employment.

Opposition increases as policy proposals deemphasize individual initiative or promise to guarantee a certain adequate standard of living; opposition decreases when the main alternative to government employment assistance is direct welfare payments. For this reason, "workfare" proposals are popular and less divisive among conservative segments of the public. Workfare also has substantial support among economically liberal segments of the public—among blacks, women, young adults, and liberal elites—but many of these may presume that constructive jobs and job training will be provided, along with support services such as child care and medical care (see Shapiro and Patterson, 1986). Moreover, it is probably anticipated that jobs would be available for *men* as well. In contrast, the conservative interpretation is that workfare involves forced self-help, in which individuals and the private sector, not the government, take the greatest responsibility for seeking and providing jobs and arranging for necessary services.

Support for the expansion of child-care facilities has increased due to the increasing numbers of women in the labor force and the need for there to be two wage-earners in order to afford a middle-class standard of living, but the public has been hesitant in seeking child-care services provided by the government. The public appears receptive toward innovations such as unpaid "parental leaves," but not, thus far, toward paid leaves or ideas such as job-sharing.

The survey questions reported here were taken from the files of the Policy Change and Public Opinion Change Project at NORC (originally supported by the National Science Foundation, grant #SES-7912969 A01). These data were compiled from published and unpublished sources, and with the assistance of the Roper Center, University of Connecticut; the Louis Harris Data Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, University of Michigan; and the NORC Library. Further information about these data can be obtained from the appropriate archive or survey organization. The national sample sizes are at least 1000 unless noted otherwise.

ABC/WP—American Broadcasting Company/*The Washington Post*
CR—Cambridge Reports, Inc., including *America Looks Ahead* Cambridge: Cambridge Reports, 1985, and *Cambridge Reports Trends & Forecasts*
Gallup—Gallup Polls, American Institute for Public Opinion
Harris—Louis Harris and Associates
MOR—Market Opinion Research
NBC—National Broadcasting Company
NYT/CBS—*The New York Times*/Columbia Broadcasting System
Penn & Schoen—Penn & Schoen Associates
Roper—Roper Organization

SRC—Survey Research Center, University of Michigan

SRC/CPS—Survey Research Center/Center for Political Studies, University of Michigan, American National Election Studies

Trendex—Trendex, Inc./General Electric Quarterly Index of Company Relations. NB: Samples drawn from telephone directories, not RDD.

Yankelovich—Yankelovich, Skelly, and White, Inc.

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Unemployment vs. Other Economic Problems

Harris: If you had to choose, which do you think is a more serious problem for the country today—rising prices or high unemployment?

	3/73	*8/75*	*8/76*[a]	*8/77*	*2/78*	*8/78*	*6/83*[a]
Rising prices	28%	33%	40%	44%	46%	58%	27%
High unemployment	44	44	38	36	33	30	66
Both	26	22	20	19	16	9	6
Not sure	2	1	2	1	5	3	1

[a] . . . a serious economic problem . . .

Gallup: Which do you think the federal government should give greater attention to—trying to curb inflation or trying to reduce unemployment?

	1/75	*9/80*	*1/82*
Curb inflation	46%	61%	44%
Reduce unemployment	44	33	49
No opinion	10	6	7

Roper: If we have to choose between high unemployment and continuing inflation, which would you favor—letting unemployment stay high and having less of a rise in prices, or letting prices rise and having more people employed?

	10/75	*10/76*	*4/78*	*9/78*	*9/79*	*6/80*	*4/81*	*1/82*
Let unemployment stay high and have less rise in prices	19%	23%	30%	24%	28%	29%	27%	26%
Let prices rise and have more people employed	59	53	52	53	50	52	51	60
Don't know	23	24	18	23	23	18	22	14

NBC: What do you think is the most important economic problem for the government to help control during the next three years—unemployment, inflation, or interest rates?

	8/81	*9/81*	*10/81*[a]	*11/81*[a]	*12/81*[a]	*Mid-1/82*	*Late-1/82*[a]	*3/82*	*5/82*	*6/82*
Unemployment	30%	27%	32%	34%	41%	46%	47%	45%	44%	43%
Inflation	47	42	34	32	29	25	21	24	21	19
Interest rates	19	27	30	28	24	23	26	27	30	34
Not sure	4	4	4	6	6	6	6	4	5	4

[a] In these months, the question read: ". . . high unemployment, high inflation, or high interest rates."

Penn & Schoen: Which of the following is the most important thing to do to improve the economy: cut spending, reduce high interest rates, balance the budget, cut taxes, or create more jobs? (Among probable voters.)

	6/82	*8/82*	*10/82*	*12/82*	*2/83*	*4/83*	*6/83*	*8/83*	*11/83*	*2/84*	*6/84*
Cut spending	13%	17%	13%	16%	16%	16%	17%	17%	17%	20%	20%
Reduce interest rates	32	22	18	15	18	15	14	17	16	11	10
Balance the budget	13	14	12	12	12	15	17	16	15	24	25
Cut taxes	4	4	2	4	3	5	5	4	5	4	4
Create jobs	34	39	51	50	47	45	42	41	42	34	36
Don't know	4	5	3	3	5	3	5	5	6	6	6

Government Effort and Spending

Roper: There are many problems facing our nation today. But at certain times some things are more important than others, and need more attention from our Federal Government than others . . . I'd like to know for each of the things on this list whether you think it is something the government should be making a *major* effort on now, or something the government should be making *some* effort on now, or something not needing any particular government effort now . . . Trying to reduce unemployment.

	6/82	*6/83*	*6/84*
Major effort	82%	84%	75%
Some effort	14	13	20
No particular effort now	3	2	4
Don't know	2	1	2

Trendex: I would like to get your opinion on several areas of important government activities. As I read each one, please tell me if you would like the government to do more, do less or do about the same as they have been on . . . expanding employment.

	2/66	*1/68*	*5/68*	*2/69*	*4/70*	*8/70*	*5/71*	*11/71*	*5/72*
Do more	58%	56%	62%	55%	59%	64%	73%	73%	73%
Do less	14	14	15	17	15	12	10	11	9
Do same	27	28	20	27	23	21	14	14	16
DK/NA	10	2	3	1	3	3	3	2	2

	8/72	*11/72*	*2/73*	*8/73*	*1/74*	*5/74*	*7/74*	*10/74*	*2/75*
Do more	73%	75%	69%	64%	65%	62%	62%	65%	71%
Do less	10	10	11	12	12	14	15	14	13
Do same	14	14	18	21	19	20	20	18	14
DK/NA	2	1	2	3	3	4	3	3	3

	4/75	*7/75*	*11/75*	*5/76*	*8/76*	*11/76*	*2/77*	*5/77*	*8/77*
Do more	70%	68%	68%	66%	67%	69%	73%	70%	70%
Do less	15	14	17	16	15	17	14	15	13
Do same	13	16	14	16	15	13	12	14	16
DK/NA	2	3	2	2	3	1	2	2	2

	11/77	*2/78*	*5/78*	*11/78*	*2/79*	*5/79*	*8/79*	*11/79*	*2/80*
Do more	70%	67%	61%	60%	61%	61%	63%	62%	57%
Do less	15	13	21	20	19	18	17	20	22
Do same	13	19	17	18	19	20	18	17	19
DK/NA	2	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	2

	5/80	*8/80*	*11/80*	*2/81*	*5/81*	*8/81*	*2/82*	*5/82*	*8/82*	*11/82*
Do more	65%	67%	64%	64%	61%	63%	67%	71%	70%	73%
Do less	22	21	21	24	23	21	19	16	16	12
Do same	11	10	13	11	15	15	13	12	13	13
DK/NA	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2

Trendex: I would like to get your opinion on several areas of important government activities. As I read each one, please tell me if you would like the government to do more, do less or do about the same as they have been on . . . expanding employment.
(For each "More" in this question, ask:) I notice you said you would like the

government to do more on expanding employment. Would you favor this increased activity if it required an increase in taxes?

	5/72	*5/78*	*5/79*	*5/81*	*5/82*
Yes	49%	46%	43%	47%	57%
No	44	45	48	44	34
DK/NA/Ref.	7	9	7	9	9
N =	783	633	622	631	729

Roper, SRC: Turning now to the business of the country--we are faced with many problems in this country, none of which can be solved easily or inexpensively. I'm going to name some of these problems, and for each one I'd like you to tell me whether you think we're spending too much money on it, too little money, or about the right amount . . . Unemployment—are we spending too much, too little, or about the right amount on unemployment insurance benefits?

	SRC		*Roper*		
	Spring 1961[a]	*Fall 1961*[a]	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*
Too much	13%	16%	16%	13%	13%
Too little	33	24	31	36	32
About right	44	47	38	40	43
Don't know	10	13	15	11	12
		N = 941			

[a] Do you think the government should be spending more money, less money, or about the same amount on . . . unemployment insurance benefits.

ABC/WP: I'd like to ask about some specific federal government programs. For each, please tell me whether you feel spending for that program should be increased, decreased or left about the same. . . . Unemployment insurance.

	1981	*1986*
Decrease	25%	18%
Spend about the same	49	57
Increase	23	24
No opinion	3	1

Government Assistance in Providing Jobs

NYT/CBS, SRC/CPS: The government in Washington ought to see to it that everybody who wants to work can find a job.

	SRC/CPS			*CBS*		
	1956	*1958*	*1960*	*3/76*	*4/76*	*5/76*
Agree	56%[a]	57%[a]	58%[a]	67%	69%	70%
Disagree	27[b]	26[b]	23[b]	27	26	24
No sure	7	7	8	—	—	—
No opinion/DK/NA	10	10	11	6	5	4

[a] Agree strongly and agree, but not very strongly.

[b] Disagree, but not very strongly, and disagree strongly.

	CBS			
	6/76	*9/76*[c]	*10/76*	*1/78*
Agree	71%	70%	73%	74%
Disagree	24	26	25	22
DK/NA	5	4	2	4

[c] The federal government should see to it that every person who wants to work has a job.

Yankelovich: A number of controversial proposals are being discussed these days. I'd like you to tell me for each one whether you strongly agree with it, partially agree with it, or disagree with it. Let's start with this one . . . It's up to the government to make sure that everyone has a good job and a good standard of living.

	3/74	*11/74*	*5/75*	*1/76*
Agree strongly	24%	18%	25%[a]	26%[a]
Agree partially	37	34	30	35
Disagree	38[b]	48	45	39

[a] "Strongly agree"
[b] "Disagree strongly"

SRC/CPS, MOR: Some people feel that the government in Washington should see to it that every person has a job and a good standard of living. Others think the government should just let each person get ahead on his own. And, of course, other people have opinions somewhere in between. Suppose people who believe that the government should see to it that every person has a job and a good standard of living are at one end of this scale—at point number 1. And suppose that the people who believe that the government should let each person get ahead on his own are at the other end—at point number 7. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this?

		SRC/CPS		*MOR*	*SRC/CPS*
		9–11/72	*11/72–2/73*	*12/74*	*11/74–1/75*
Government see to job	1.	16%	14%	14%	14%
	2.	7	6	5	6
	3.	9	12	7	10
	4.	23	23	22	25
	5.	14	15	15	15
	6.	8	11	11	10
Let each get ahead on own	7.	22	20	27	20

		MOR	*SRC/CPS*		
		6/76	*11/76*	*11/76–1/77*	*11/78–1/79*
Government see to job	1.	15%	14%	7%	9%
	2.	6	6	5	4
	3.	8	10	10	9
	4.	22	22	27	24
	5.	17	13	18	19
	6.	8	13	16	15
Let each get ahead on own	7.	23	22	17	21

		MOR	*SRC/CPS*		
		10–11/79	*4/80*	*9/80*	*11/80*
Government see to job	1.	11%	11%	9%	12%
	2.	4	6	6	8
	3.	9	7	9	11
	4.	21	15	20	21
	5.	16	15	22	16
	6.	13	22	19	19
Let each get ahead on own	7.	26	24	16	14
			N = 834	*N* = 638	

		SRC/CPS		
		11/82–1/83	*9–11/84*	*11/84–1/85*
Government see to job	1.	11%	12%	10%
	2.	7	8	7
	3.	10	13	12
	4.	23	23	23
	5.	18	19	23
	6.	15	15	15
Let each get ahead on own	7.	14	10	11
				N = 879

Harris: In general, as far as you personally are concerned, would you favor or oppose a federal program to give productive jobs to the unemployed?

	May 1972	*August 1972*
Favor	87%	89%
Oppose	8	7
Not sure	5	4

Yankelovich: The Republican and Democratic party platforms differ on many issues. We'd like to know how you feel. For example, do you favor or oppose . . . the passage of a full employment bill in which the government guarantees a job to everyone who wants to work?

	8/76	*3/77*	*11/77*
Favor	56%	60%	61%
Oppose	37	32	32
Not sure	7	9	8

Yankelovich: When it comes right down to it, what do you think will be best for the country and people like yourself, the government creating jobs by putting money into things like railroads, housing and schools, or by cutting back on existing programs and trying to achieve a balanced budget?

	1/76	*8/76*	*3/77*
Government creating jobs	49%	45%	43%
Cutting back	40	46	48
Not sure	11	10	9

Gallup: Some people say that all young men between the ages of 16 and 22 who are out of work should be required to join a youth conservation corps to carry on their education, learn a trade, and earn a little money. Do you approve or disapprove of this plan?

	1957[a]	*1961*[b]	*1964*	*1968*[c]	*1971*
Approve	64%	59%	73%	71%	66%
Disapprove	28	34	21	25	27
No opinion	7	7	6	4	7

[a] It has been suggested that youngsters over 16 who have dropped out of school, and are not working, be sent to youth work camps, like the CCC camps several years ago to learn a trade. Does this sound like a good idea or a poor idea to you?

[b] Do you think young men who are not in school, who do not have jobs, and who are not learning a trade should be required to go to one of these camps, or not?

[c] . . . who are out of school and out of work and not now in the army . . .

Gallup: It is proposed that the Federal Government set up youth camps--such as the CCC camps of the 1930's—for young men who want to learn a trade and earn a little money by outdoor work. Do you think this is a good idea or a poor idea?

	7/61[a]	*3/62*[a]	*8/63*	*12/76*
Good idea	80%	79%	89%	85%
Poor idea	13	16	6	10
No opinion	7	5	5	5

[a] . . . —for young men 16 to 22 years old who . . .

Private Efforts

Trendex: Would you like to see private enterprise do more, do less or do about the same as they have been in connection with expanding employment?

	2/65	*2/66*	*2/68*	*2/69*	*8/76*
Do more	89%	84%	80%	82%	83%
Do less	1	1	1	*	1
Do same	10	14	17	16	13
DK/NA	1	1	1	1	3

* less than 1%

Roper: There is a lot of talk about what to do about unemployment in this country. Here are some suggestions that have been made. (Card shown respondent.) Would you read over those suggestions and then tell me which *one* best expresses what you think should be done about unemployment?

	1976	*1982*
Encourage business expansion by giving business tax breaks for expanding, thus creating more jobs for people	31%	39%
Provide government jobs for the unemployed	28	24
Give incentives to business (tax breaks, etc.) to encourage business to hire people they wouldn't otherwise take on	20	22
Don't do anything different—just let things take their natural course	8	7
Don't know	13	8

Trendex: There is much talk about whose responsibility it is to solve problems such as financing medical care, looking after the aged, employment problems and adequate housing. For each of these problems I am going to ask you which group should have the main responsibility for solving that problem—the individual and his family, local government, national government, large companies or other private groups . . . What about employment problems?

	2/82	*8/82*
Individual and family	18%	18%
Local government	30	27
National government	27	30
Large companies	17	17
Other private	4	4
DK/NA	4	3

CR: To the extent workers who lose their jobs need to be retrained to find new jobs, who should be primarily responsible for paying for this training? Should the retraining be paid for by the government, the companies that laid off the workers, the companies that are hiring new workers, or should the retraining be paid for by the workers themselves?

	1984	*1986*
Government	9%	9%
Companies that laid off workers	24	29
Companies that hire new workers	27	19
Workers themselves	7	9
(Combination)	30	31
(Other)	—	1
(DK)	3	4

CR: Do you favor or oppose laws that would require companies to keep on their payroll any employees who lose their jobs because of technological change?

	1983	*1985*	*1986*
Favor	39%	41%	38%
Oppose	42	42	46
(DK)	19	17	16

Roper: One suggestion made that might help in putting more people to work is to let two people hold one full time job, with each working half a day and sharing the salary and benefits. Do you think this is a good idea or not?

	1976	*1982*
Good idea	18%	35%
Not a good idea	76	60
Don't know	6	5

Workfare

Harris: In general, as far as you personally are concerned, would you favor or oppose making people on welfare go to work?

	5/72	*8/72*
Favor	88%	89%
Oppose	6	6
Not sure	6	5

NBC: Do you think that those people who receive welfare and are capable of working should be required to work at public jobs in order to receive their checks?

	8/77
Yes	93%
No	6
Not sure	6

Roper: Welfare recipients who are capable of holding only low paying jobs have ittle incentive to find jobs, for they lose their welfare benefits if they are employed. It has been proposed to change the system to provide job inceptive. If a welfare recipient got a job, his welfare benefits would only go down one dollar for every two dollars he earned. Would you favor or oppose such a change in the welfare system?

	3/76	*11/77*
Favor change	69%	74%
Oppose change	19	19
DK/No answer	11	7

Gallup: It has been proposed that all able-bodied mothers of children between 6 and 13 who are on welfare be required to register with state employment offices and to take any *full-time* work available. Would you favor or oppose such a plan?

	5/79
Favor	79%
Oppose	17
No opinion	4

Gallup: It has been proposed that all able-bodied mothers of children between 6 and 13 who are on welfare be required to register with state employment offices and to take any *part-time* work available. Would you favor or oppose such a plan?

	5/79
Favor	68%
Oppose	28
No opinion	4

Gallup: Some states have laws requiring people on welfare who have completed job search and training programs and still can't find jobs, to work at public service or nonprofit jobs without additional pay. Would you like to see such a law in your state, or not?

	12/85
Favor	69%
Oppose	25
No opinion	6

ABC/WP: Would you favor or oppose legislation that requires able-bodied people on public assistance to work at any minimum-wage job in return for their benefits?

	12/85
Favor	77%
Oppose	18
DK/No opinion	5

ABC/WP: Would you favor or oppose legislation that requires able-bodied people on public assistance to undergo job training in return for their benefits?

	12/85
Favor	89%
Oppose	8
DK/No opinion	3

Day Care and Employment

Harris, Gallup: Do you favor or oppose the idea of setting up many more day-care centers where working mothers could leave their children during the day?

	Gallup	*Harris*	
	4/69[a]	*8/70*	*10/75*
Favor	64%	56%	67%
Oppose	30	31	25
Not sure	6	13	8

[a] Day-care centers for very young children are being set up so that mothers in poor areas can take jobs and so that children can get early educational training. How do you feel about this—would you favor or oppose having the Federal government provide funds to set up these centers in most communities?

CR: Some companies today are making day-care facilities available to their employees. Do you think companies should share the responsibility of providing day care, or is it primarily up to the parents?

	Working Women		*Overall*
	1978	*1986*	*1986*
Companies should share	40%	59%	55%
Parents' responsibility	46	37	39
(DK)	15	4	6
	(*N* = 300)	(*N* = 346)	

CR: Would you agree or disagree: Companies should make day-care facilities available to their employees as part of their benefits.

	Working Women		*Overall*
	1978	*1986*	*1986*
Agree	46%	63%	60%
Disagree	34	27	30
(DK)	20	10	10
	(*N* = 300)	(*N* = 346)	

ABC/WP: I'd like to ask about some specific federal government programs. For each, please tell me whether you feel spending for that program should be increased, decreased or left about the same. . . . Day care program for children of working parents.

	1981	*1986*
Decrease	15%	11%
Spend about the same	46	44
Increase	38	44
No opinion	1	1

Gallup: A proposal has been made to make child-care centers available for all preschool children as part of the public school system. This program would be supported by taxes. Would you favor or oppose such a program in your school district?

	1976	*1981*	*1985*
Favor	46%	46%	43%
Oppose	49	47	45
Don't know	5	7	12

CR: Congress is now considering a bill, often called the "parental leave" bill, that would require employers with five or more workers to offer both mothers and fathers an unpaid leave of up to 18 weeks after a birth or adoption. The legislation would require employers to give parents their former jobs or comparable ones when they returned to work. The bill would also allow parents time off to care for a seriously ill child. Do you think requiring employers to provide unpaid parental leave for employees is a good idea or a bad idea?

	1986
Good idea	63%
Bad idea	25
(DK)	12

CR: What about paid parental leave: Do you think it would be a good idea or a bad idea to enact a law that would require employers to give both mothers and fathers 3 months of leave at 75% pay following a birth or adoption?

	1986
Good idea	38%
Bad idea	50
(DK)	13

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THE TREND IN "NO RELIGION" RESPONDENTS TO U.S. NATIONAL SURVEYS, LATE 1950s TO EARLY 1980s

NORVAL D. GLENN

Abstract Data from 110 U.S. national surveys are used to study the trend in "no religion" responses from the late 1950s to the early 1980s. The trend was monotonically upward, at least until the 1980s, when there were signs of leveling off or an incipient reversal of the trend. The trend came about through both changes within birth cohorts and cohort succession, and it involved persons of all major religious backgrounds and both men and women. Whether or not the change indicates an important degree of secularization is considered at length. Problems involved in using a dichotomous indicator to gauge change in a quantitative variable are discussed.

The secularization thesis—the notion that modern and modernizing societies move inevitably and monotonically away from the sacred and toward the secular—has always been dominant in the social scientific study of religion (Hammond, 1985:1–6; Wilson, 1985). Secularization has been one of the master trends, along with such changes as industrialization and urbanization, that have transformed traditional societies into modern ones, and according to the basic version of the secularization thesis, secularization continues in societies that are already modern.

In the past few years, however, the basic and simple version of the thesis has been strongly challenged. That modern societies are substantially more secular than traditional ones is hardly in doubt, but it is much less certain that there is continuing, inevitable, and irreversible secularization in modern societies. A recently published edited volume sponsored by the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion presents an abundance of evidence for the persistence of the sacred in contem-

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porary societies (Hammond, 1985), and several authors have emphasized the continued importance of religion in the United States (Swanson, 1968; Greeley, 1972; McCready and Greeley, 1976).

One of the strongest challenges to the basic version of the secularization thesis has come from the researchers who restudied "Middletown" (Muncie, Indiana) in the 1970s. In the second volume reporting findings from the Middletown III study, Caplow, Bahr, and Chadwick (1983) compared data collected in Muncie in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1970s and, aside from a decrease in religious endogamy, found no evidence they considered clearly to indicate secularization. Rather, they found such changes as increases in the proportion of the labor force engaged in religious activity, the proportion of total income devoted to religion, the proportion of rites of passage held under religious auspices, the number of churches per capita, and the percentage of the population who attended church regularly. Overall, they concluded, the changes looked more like sacralization than secularization. They also argued that Muncie is not highly atypical, presented some recent national data showing high levels of traditional religious belief and of religious identification, and argued that there has been no decline in the importance of religion in the entire society in recent decades.

The Muncie findings are important and have definite implications for the secularization thesis, but unless Muncie is American society in microcosm, they are not sufficient to support conclusions about trends in the total society. Although Caplow and his associates made considerable use of recent national survey data, they did not use indicators of religiosity for different points in time to infer trends but rather inferred lack of change from data for one point in time. A particularly egregious example of this questionable procedure is their interpretation of national Gallup data on religious preference: "The proportion of the U.S. population who claimed no religious preference in the 1977–1978 surveys was 6 percent, a figure impossible to reconcile with the waning of religion so often mentioned as a contemporary social trend" (p. 28).

It is impossible to reconcile a waning of religion with the 6% of "no religion" responses only if (*a*) all of the persons with a religious preference are uniformly high in religiosity (a patently false assumption) and (*b*) the difference between 6% and any smaller percentage cannot reflect an important difference in the distribution of religiosity. In fact, the difference between 6% and a smaller percentage, such as 2%, is likely to reflect an important difference in religiosity.[1] A change of only

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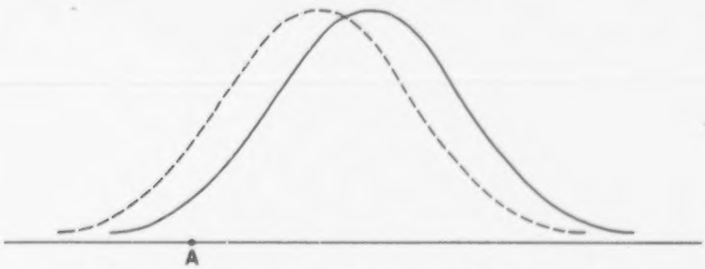
[1] As Stark and Bainbridge (1985:47) point out, saying that one has no religion does not necessarily mean that one does not believe in the supernatural or have some kind of personal religion. However, it does indicate a lack of identification with institutional religion, and thus it is a negative indicator of institutional religiosity. Of course, institu-



Time 1 indicated by a solid line, Time 2 by a broken line.

Figure 1. Normal Curves Illustrating Change in a Distribution That Would Produce a Four-Percentage-Point Change in a Lower-Tailed Dichotomous Indicator

four percentage points, from 2% to 6%, in persons so low in religiosity that they report no religious preference may seem small, but it is unlikely that such a change would occur in the absence of considerable change in religiosity among persons retaining a religious preference.

Suppose, for instance, that religiosity is normally distributed, as indicated by the curves in Figure 1, and that the point on the scale of religiosity below which persons will say they have no religion is indicated by *A* in the figure. The Time 1 curve in the figure represents the distribution when only 2% of the population have no religion and thus are to the left of Point A. The Time 2 curve represents a distribution with the same variance when 6% of the population have no religion. The difference between the two distributions is not trivial, the mean of the Time 2 distribution being one-half of a standard deviation lower than the mean of the Time 1 distribution. Further, if a dichotomous indicator of religiosity were used which divided the population at the mean at Time 1, 19% of the population would shift from the high to the low category from Time 1 to Time 2.

Although the percentage of "no religion" responses to national surveys at one point in time, or during a one- or two-year period, cannot provide compelling evidence of recent secularization or a lack of it, an examination of the trend in these responses during recent decades can provide stronger evidence. In this paper, I use data from 110 U.S. national surveys conducted by three major survey organizations over a 30-year period to see if there was an increase in the percentage of respondents who said they had no religion and to assess the probable importance of any observed increase. The primary purpose is to contribute to current attempts to refine and qualify the basic secularization thesis (Hammond, 1985) and thereby to contribute to the understand-

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tional religiosity is the kind that has usually been of concern to social scientists and has distinctly important social implications. The term "religiosity," as it is used in this paper, is short for "institutional religiosity."

ing of religion in modern societies. A secondary purpose is to illustrate some of the methodological and interpretative problems encountered when a dichotomous variable is used as an indicator of an underlying quantitative variable. Since some of the data are organized into a cohort format, they also have implications for questions about how persons of different ages respond to influences for change (see Glenn, 1980).

Methods

Questions about religious preference have been asked on U.S. national surveys periodically since the late 1930s, and many of the resulting data are available from the Roper Public Opinion Research Center or the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research. However, the data from the earliest surveys are not comparable with later data, since the early surveys used quota control samples rather than the probability or modified probability samples used for contemporary surveys. Furthermore, the early Gallup surveys, on which the religious preference question was asked most frequently, were designed to represent voters rather than the total adult population (Glenn, 1975). These surveys severely underrepresented women, southerners, and blacks, all of whom were less likely than other persons to report no religious preference, and thus the surveys almost certainly overestimated the proportion of the adult population with no religion. All segments of the population were not adequately represented in the Gallup samples until the mid-1950s. The early National Opinion Research Center (NORC) surveys pose less serious problems, but the religious preference question was not asked frequently on them, and they did not consistently use probability or modified probability samples until the mid-1950s.

In order to use only data from probability or modified probability samples, I began the series reported in this paper with data from National Opinion Research Center surveys conducted in 1955–1959, and I continued the NORC series by combining data collected during each subsequent five-year period through 1980–1984 (Table 1). Since Gallup has asked the religious preference question several times per year, I combined data from all of the relevant surveys conducted in each of four selected years, 1960, 1970, 1980, and 1984 (Table 1). I selected the first three years in order to construct a standard cohort table (Table 2) to assess the contributions of cohort succession and within-cohort changes to the observed total change over two decades. I added the 1984 data to bring the story as up-to-date as was possible when I started the study in 1985, and I also used the 1984 data to construct a

Table 1. Percentage of Respondents to U.S. National Surveys Who Said They Had No Religion, Late 1950s to Early 1980s

Date	%	(*N*)
National Opinion Research Center surveys		
1955–1959[a] (9 surveys)	2.1	(11,297)
1960–1964[b] (2 surveys)	3.3**	(3,059)
1965–1969[b] (3 surveys)	3.0	(4,462)
1970–1974[c] (4 surveys)	6.2**	(6,081)
1975–1979[d] (5 surveys)	7.3*	(7,544)
1980–1984[d] (4 surveys)	7.3	(6,019)
Gallup surveys		
1960[e] (17 surveys)	2.3	(50,368)[f]
1970[e] (21 surveys)	3.4**	(66,036)[f]
1980[g] (19 surveys)	7.4**	(52,441)[f]
1984[h] (19 surveys)	8.0*	(50,607)[f]

[a] Question wording: "What religion do you consider yourself?"

[b] Question wording: "What is your religious preference?"

[c] Question wording, 1970 survey: "What is your religious preference now?" 1972, 1973, and 1974 surveys: "What is your religious preference? Is it Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, some other religion, or no religion?"

[d] Question wording: "What is your religious preference? Is it Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, some other religion, or no religion?"

[e] Question wording: "What is your religious preference—Protestant, Roman Catholic, or Jewish?"

[f] Weighted. The number of respondents is between 50% and 60% of the reported *N*.

[g] Question wording: "What is your religious preference—Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish, or an Orthodox Church such as the Greek or Russian Orthodox Church?"

[h] Question wording: "What is your religious preference—Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish, Morman, or an Orthodox Church such as Greek or Russian Orthodox Church?"

*Significantly greater than the value for the previous time period at the .10 level (two-tailed)

**Significantly greater than the value for the previous time period at the .01 level (two-tailed)

nonstandard cohort table (Table 3) to trace within-cohort changes for four additional years.

Even though no serious problems of comparability are posed for either the NORC or the Gallup series by changes in sample design, there were some changes in question wording (see notes a–h of Table 1). This might seem to pose a serious problem for the NORC series, since "no religion" was explicitly offered as a response alternative on the later surveys but not on the earlier ones. Furthermore, the biggest indicated increase in "no religion" responses is from 1965–

Table 2. Percentage of Respondents to U.S. National Surveys Who Said They Had No Religion, by Age, 1960, 1970, and 1980

Age	1960 % (*N*)[a]	1970 % (*N*)[a]	1980 % (*N*)[a]
20–29	2.6 (8,116)	7.1*** (13,336)	12.6*** (12,047)
30–39	2.0 (11,312)	3.5*** (12,044)	8.8*** (9,896)
40–49	1.8 (11,026)	2.4* (13,438)	5.3*** (7,966)
50–59	1.7 (8,755)	2.0 (11,682)	3.7*** (8,014)
60–69	1.4 (6,962)	2.2* (9,606)	3.5** (6,586)
70–79	1.6 (3,431)	1.8 (5,424)	3.6*** (3,954)

SOURCE: Gallup Surveys. See notes e and g of Table 1 for question wording.

[a] Weighted. The number of respondents is between 50% and 60% of the reported *N*.

* Significantly greater than the value for the previous time period at the .10 level (two-tailed)

** Significantly greater than the value for the previous time period at the .05 level (two-tailed)

*** Significantly greater than the value for the previous time period at the .01 level (two-tailed)

1969 to 1970–1974, and three of the four surveys during the latter period were the first to offer "no religion" as an explicitly stated alternative. However, Gallup has never explicitly offered "no religion" as an alternative, and the changes in the NORC percentages closely parallel the changes in the Gallup percentages (Table 1). The only changes in the wording of the Gallup question were the adding of religious categories other than Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Jewish, and it seems extremely unlikely that these changes contributed to the increase in "no religion" responses.[2]

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[2] For the earliest surveys included in this study, the population sampled was persons age 21 and older, whereas after persons ages 18, 19, and 20 were given the franchise throughout the country, they were included in the sampled population. However, inclusion of the 18- to 20-year-olds in the earlier surveys would have had little or no effect on the percentages in Table 1, since at that time reporting "no religion" was virtually unrelated to age.

Table 3. Percentage of Respondents to U.S. National Surveys Who Said They Had No Religion, by Birth Cohort, 1960, 1970, 1980, and 1984

Cohort (Birth Dates)[a]	1960	1970	1980	1984
1950–1959				
Ages	—	—	20–29	24–33
%	—	—	12.6	12.6
(*N*)[b]	—	—	(12,047)	(11,862)
1940–1949				
Ages	—	20–29	30–39	34–43
%	—	7.1	8.8**	8.8
(*N*)[b]	—	(13,336)	(9,896)	(8,838)
1930–1939				
Ages	20–29	30–39	40–49	44–53
%	2.6	3.5*	5.3***	5.2
(*N*)[b]	(8,116)	(12,044)	(7,966)	(6,829)
1920–1929				
Ages	30–39	40–49	50–59	54–63
%	2.0	2.4	3.7***	3.9
(*N*)	(11,312)	(13,438)	(8,014)	(6,730)
1910–1919				
Ages	40–59	50–59	60–69	64–73
%	1.8	2.0	3.5***	4.1
(*N*)	(11,026)	(11,682)	(6,586)	(5,594)

SOURCE: Gallup Surveys. See notes e, g, and h of Table 1 for question wording.

[a] Birth dates are approximate. For instance, members of the "1950–1959" cohort were born between about the middle of 1950 and about the middle of 1960.

[b] Weighted. The number of respondents is between 50% and 60% of the reported *N*.

* Significantly greater than the value for the previous time period at the .10 level (two-tailed)

** Significantly greater than the value for the previous time period at the .05 level (two-tailed)

*** Significantly greater than the value for the previous time period at the .01 level (two-tailed)

For consistency, I computed only two-tailed significance tests, but since the secularization thesis predicts an increase in "no religion" responses, one-tailed tests are appropriate when an increase is indicated from one date to the next. All of the data are from multistage cluster samples and thus are subject to design effects (Kish, 1965; Frankel, 1971), that is, the standard errors of parameter estimates may be larger than they would be if the samples were simple random. To allow for possible design effects, I used two-thirds of the real *N* to compute significance tests in the case of the NORC unweighted samples and one-third of the reported *N* in the case of the Gallup weighted samples, for which the number of respondents varies between about 50% and about 60% of the reported *N*. Since differences between percentages, being analogous to unstandardized regression coefficients, are unlikely to have large design effects (Frankel, 1971), these corrections are conservative.

Examination of the basic trend and cohort data suggested the need for some additional analytic procedures, which are described below after discussion of the data in Tables 1–3.

Findings and Interpretation

THE TREND

The Gallup data show a monotonic increase in the percentage of "no religion" respondents over the four dates, and the NORC data show a similar, but not quite monotonic, increase during the six 5-year periods (Table 1). The most important differences between the two series is that the NORC data indicate that the percentage of persons with no religion has leveled off in recent years whereas the Gallup data show a statistically significant increase from 1980 to 1984.

The NORC series shows a total increase from 1955–1959 to 1980–1984 of 5.2 percentage points, and the Gallup series shows an increase from 1960 to 1984 of 5.7 points. Given the very low levels from which these changes started, they *probably* reflect fairly substantial changes in religiosity in the total adult population. For instance, if (*a*) the distinction between persons who say they have no religion and those who state a religious preference marks a point on the scale of religiosity and (*b*) the distribution of religiosity was normal with a constant standard deviation, the observed changes indicate that the mean religiosity of the population decreased by .58 of a standard deviation according to the NORC series and by .59 of a standard deviation according to the Gallup series. Changes of these magnitudes would move more than 22% of the population across a point on the scale of religiosity marked by the mean at the beginning of the series.

The indicated changes were greater at the young adult age levels, as later-born cohorts moved into those ages, than they were in the total adult population (Table 2). The percentage of "no religion" responses increased by ten points at ages 20–29 and by 6.8 points at ages 30–39 from 1960 to 1980. Assuming the conditions mentioned in the previous paragraph, these changes represent changes of .8 and .7 of a standard deviation in the distribution of religiosity and moved 29% and 26% of the persons at the two age levels across points on the scale of religiosity marked by the means in 1960.

However, within-cohort changes as well as cohort succession contributed to the change in the total adult population. Each of the four ten-year birth cohorts represented at all three dates in Table 2 shows a statistically significant increase in "no religion" responses from 1960 to 1980, the mean change being 2.0 percentage points. Although a mean change of this size may seem small, it could represent an important degree of within-cohort change in religiosity. If religiosity in each cohort was normally distributed with a constant standard deviation, and if the "no religion" respondents represented the lower extreme of the distribution, the mean within-cohort change was .3 of a standard deviation, and on the average 12% of the cohort members dropped below the point on the scale of religiosity marked by the cohort mean in 1960.

I must emphasize that the estimates of changes in religiosity given here are to illustrate how large such changes *may have been*, not to show how large they certainly were. Religiosity may not have been normally distributed, and the standard deviation of the distribution may not have remained constant. It is even possible, though perhaps not likely, that mean religiosity has not declined at all in this country in recent decades. This is possible because the increase in the percentage of persons at the low extreme of religiosity could have been offset by an increase in the percentage of persons at the high extreme, that is, there could have been movement toward polarization. Thus, an adequate assessment of the trend in overall religiosity requires supplementation of the "no religion" responses with other indicators—a point to which I return below. However, the data in Table 1 and 2 do indicate that there have been some fairly strong influences for secularization in the U.S. in recent decades to which at least a portion of the population has responded. That portion has almost certainly been larger than the percentage of persons who changed from stating a religious preference to saying they had no religion, and it may have included most of the population.

Although the Gallup data for the total adult population show a continued increase in "no religion" responses from 1980 to 1984, the cohort data in Table 3 indicate that the within-cohort trends have leveled off, at least in the younger cohorts. Furthermore, the percentage of "no religion" responses from persons ages 18–23 in 1984 (not shown in the table) was 11.5, slightly lower than the percentage from persons ages 24–33. This difference is not statistically significant, ac-

Table 4. Percentage of U.S. High School Seniors Who Said They Had No Religion, Annual National Samples, 1976 to 1982

Date	%	(*N*)[a]
1976	11.4	(14,444)
1977	10.4	(15,153)
1978	9.7	(17,990)
1979	8.9	(15,919)
1980	8.9	(15,750)
1981	9.3	(17,561)
1982	9.5	(17,544)

SOURCE: Monitoring the Future Survey, as reported in Bachman, Johnston, and O'Malley (1980a, 1980b, 1981, 1984) and Johnston, Bachman, and O'Malley (1980a, 1980b, 1982).

[a] Weighted. The number of respondents is about the same as or greater than the reported *N*.

cording to the conservative procedure used here for estimating significance ($p = .17$ on a two-tailed test), but it suggests an incipient reversal of the trend for each successive cohort maturing into adulthood to have a higher percentage of persons with no religion than the one before it.

To investigate this issue further, I compiled data on high school seniors from seven surveys conducted from 1976 through 1982 by the University of Michigan's Survey Research Center (SRC) (see Table 4). The trend in "no religion" responses from 1976 to 1979 was distinctly downward, the difference between the 1976 and 1979 percentages (2.5 points) being statistically significant at the .05 level on a two-tailed test. Since the percentage rose slightly from 1980 to 1982, the difference between the 1976 and 1982 percentages is not statistically significant ($p = .14$ on a two-tailed test). However, the 1982 percentage is lower by 1.9 points, and this finding, when considered in conjunction with the Gallup data, is fairly strong evidence for a cessation, if not an incipient reversal, of the intercohort trend toward higher percentages of young adults having no religion.

Thus it is rather clear when one examines the NORC, Gallup, and SRC data together that the conservative reaction that began in this country in the late 1970s has weakened or offset the influences that produced the steady increase in "no religion" responses during the previous 15 to 20 years. This indicates that some aspects of secularization in modern societies can be stopped and perhaps reversed, at least temporarily.

RELIGIOUS BACKGROUNDS OF THE "NO RELIGION" RESPONDENTS

Persons with Jewish backgrounds have been unusually likely to have no religion as adults, and apostasy has been relatively rare among Catholics and Protestants in the U.S. (Chalfant, Beckley, and Palmer, 1981; Stark and Bainbridge, 1985:403). It might seem possible, therefore, that the "no religion" respondents to recent national surveys generally have non-Christian family backgrounds and that the secularization indicated by the increase in "no religion" responses has not appreciably involved the Christian majority. A secularization of the non-Christian minority might be concurrent with the kind of sacralization of Christians indicated by the Middletown data.

To cast light on this issue, I tabulated data from the 1973–1983 General Social Surveys on "current religious preference" by "religion in which raised" for each of three broad age levels. The percentages of "no religion" responses are reported in Table 5.

The respondents raised in the Jewish or "other" (mainly non-Christian) religions *were* more likely to report no religious preference than were those raised as Protestants or Catholics, and of course those raised in no religion were most likely to have no religion. However, at ages 18–29, the percentages of "no religion" responses were virtually identical for those raised as Protestants, Catholics, and "other," and the percentage for those raised as Jews was only moderately higher. The differences by age apparently reflect a trend, since the cohort data in Tables 2 and 3 reveal no apparent tendency for religious identification to increase within a birth cohort as it grows older. Thus it is important that there was a distinct inverse relationship between age and reporting no religion except among persons raised in "other" religions.

Another way to view the data is to calculate the percentage of "no religion" respondents who came from each of the religious backgrounds (data not shown in tabular form). More than half (51.8%) were raised as Protestants, more than a fourth (27.0%) were raised as Catholics, and only 3.4% and 1.6% were raised as Jews and in other religions, respectively. Although 15.8% were raised with no religion, 60.7% of those raised without a religion reported a religious preference—an indication that apostasy is often reversed intergenerationally.

Overall, these data show that the trend to no religion has been pervasive, occurring among persons from all of the major religious backgrounds.

MALE–FEMALE DIFFERENCES IN THE TREND

Secularization has somewhat different implications when it involves mainly men (as in some parts of Latin America) than when it pro-

Table 5. Percentage of Respondents to U.S. National Surveys Who Said They Had No Religion, by Age and Religion in Which Raised

	Age			
Religion in Which Raised	18–29 % (*N*)	30–49 % (*N*)	50 and Older % (*N*)	All Ages % (*N*)
Protestant	10.4	5.9	2.3	5.5
	(2,177)	(3,231)	(3,878)	(9,286)
Catholic	10.8	7.6	3.0	7.1
	(1,152)	(1,372)	(1,217)	(3,741)
Jewish	16.7	12.3	5.4	9.9
	(72)	(106)	(166)	(344)
Other	10.5	10.0	15.6	12.0
	(38)	(50)	(45)	(133)
All religions	10.6	6.6	2.7	6.1
	(3,439)	(4,759)	(5,306)	(13,504)
No religion	57.6	30.3	27.3	39.3
	(144)	(145)	(110)	(399)
Total	12.5	7.3	3.2	7.1
	(3,583)	(4,904)	(5,416)	(13,903)

SOURCE: Combined data from the 1973 through 1983 General Source Surveys conducted by the National Opinion Research Center. See note d of Table 1 for wording of question on current religious preference. Wording of religious origin question: "In what religion were you raised?"

foundly involves both men and women. For instance, it has greater implications for the socialization of future generations when it occurs among both sexes than when it occurs mainly among men. Thus, the increase in "no religion" responses in this country in recent decades may be relatively unimportant if it has occurred mainly among men.

In percentage points, the change from 1960 to 1984 indicated by the Gallup data was almost twice as great for men as for women (Table 6). However, differences between percentages at different levels of the percentage scale would be comparable only in the unlikely event that the underlying variable were distributed so that equal numbers of cases were at each point on the scale (of the underlying variable) within the range of the cases. The distribution of the underlying variable is much more likely to be peaked and unimodal, and if it is, a logit or probit transformation of the percentages will usually make differences at dif-

Table 6. Percentage and Log-Odds of Respondents to U.S. National Surveys Who Said They Had No Religion, by Sex, 1960, 1970, 1980, and 1984

	Percentage			Log-Odds		
Year	Males	Females	Difference	Males	Females	Difference
1960	2.7	1.2	1.5	−1.56	−1.92	.36
1970	4.8	2.1	2.7	−1.30	−1.67	.37
1980	9.4	5.5	3.9	−0.98	−1.24	.26
1984	10.7	5.6	5.1	−0.92	−1.23	.31
1960–1984 Change	+8.0	+4.4		+0.64	+0.69	

SOURCE: Gallup Surveys. See notes e, g, and h of Table 1 for question wording.

ferent levels of the percentage scale more nearly comparable. Such transformations result in precise comparability, of course, only if the distribution of the underlying variable is normal (probit) or approximately so (logit) and has the same standard deviation in all of the compared populations. In Table 6, I present the results of a logit transformation, which is a substitution of the logarithm (common logarithm in this case)[3] of the odds ratio (log-odds) for each percentage.

On the log-odds scale, the indicated 1960–1984 change is slightly greater for females than for males, which indicates that the change in religiosity reflected by the change in "no religion" responses was probably as great for women as for men. Thus, the kind of secularization indicated seems to be the kind with the greater implications, especially for the socialization of future generations.

DIFFERENCES IN THE TREND AMONG COHORTS

As I point out above, the trend in "no religion" responses has been a function both of changes within birth cohorts and of cohort succession, that is, the dying of members of the older cohorts and the entry of later-born cohorts into the adult age ranges. According to what is commonly known as the "aging-stability thesis" (Ryder, 1965; Carlsson and Karlsson, 1970; Ingelhart, 1977; Glenn, 1980), the within-cohort

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[3] Use of the natural logarithm would result in different numbers but the same pattern among the numbers.

Table 7. Percentage and Log-Odds of Respondents to U.S. National Surveys Who Said They Had No Religion, by Birth Cohort, 1960 and 1980

Ages of Cohort Members in 1960	Percentage			Log-Odds		
	1960	1980	Change	1960	1980	Change
20–29	2.6	5.3	2.7*	−1.57	−1.25	.32
30–39	2.0	3.7	1.7*	−1.69	−1.42	.27
40–49	1.8	3.5	1.7*	−1.74	−1.44	.30
50–59	1.7	3.6	1.9*	−1.76	−1.43	.33

SOURCE: Table 2. See notes e and g of Table 1 for question wording. See Table 2 for *N*s.

* Significant at the .01 level (two-tailed)

changes should have been greater in the younger than in the older cohorts. The reasoning underlying this thesis is that as adults grow older, for a variety of reasons they tend to become less responsive to influences for change, so that the influences tend to create differences between older and younger cohorts. For instance, according to this view, when there are influences for change in a liberal direction, all cohorts will as a whole become more liberal, but the younger cohorts will change more than the older ones. This difference, along with cohort succession, will produce an inverse relationship between age and liberalism—a relationship that had led to the erroneous conclusion that something about growing older converts liberals to conservatives. If this view is correct, older persons should respond less, on the average, than younger ones to influences for secularization.

The 1940–1960 changes in "no religion" responses for four 10-year birth cohorts are shown in Table 7, both in raw percentage points and on the log-odds (logit) scale.

The change in percentage points was greatest for the youngest cohort, being 59% greater than the change for the second youngest cohort and 42% greater than the next largest change (for the oldest cohort). This pattern would seem to support the aging-stability thesis in that it suggests greater changeability in the cohort that aged from 20–29 to 40–49 than in any of the older cohorts. However, the changes in log-odds, which are almost certainly better indicators of changeability, do not support the thesis. The greatest indicated change is in the oldest cohort, which aged from 50–59 to 70–79. Although the youngest cohort changed more than the middle two, its change was only 19% and 7% greater than the changes in the middle two cohorts.

Thus, adults of virtually all ages seem to have been susceptible to the influences for secularization that produced the increase in "no religion" responses. So far as one can tell from these data, aging beyond young adulthood does not lead to greater resistance to ideological change, and there is some other evidence that points to the same conclusion (Glenn, 1980). However, for this purpose as for others, the percentage of "no religion" responses is too tenuous an indicator of religiosity by itself to support any strong conclusion. It is possible, for instance, that the relationship between change on the lower tail and total change in the distribution of religiosity differed among the cohorts. Among persons with a weak identification with religion, older persons may give up the identification as easily as do younger persons, while among persons strongly committed to religion, younger persons may weaken their commitment more readily than do older ones.

RELATIONSHIP OF SHORT-TERM TO LONGER-TERM CHANGE

The data in Table 1 cover 30 years, whereas the Middletown data cover more than half a century. It is possible that this incomparability in the periods covered at least partially accounts for the fact that the data presented here indicate secularization while the Middletown data do not. Perhaps by beginning the time series in the 1950s, which was presumably a time of unusually high religiosity, I detected a short-term trend that has run counter to a longer-term one. If so, the changes since the late 1970s may indicate the resumption of a long-term trend rather than a brief pause in such a trend.

Data published recently in *The Gallup Report* (The Gallup Organization, 1985:27–28) seem to support this interpretation. The percentage of "no religion" responses to Gallup surveys is reported for 1947 and at five-year intervals thereafter through 1972 and for each year from 1974 through 1984. The reported percentage for 1947 is 6, and it is 2 or 3 for subsequent years until 1972, for which it is 5. For 1974, 1975, and 1976, it is 6—the same as for 1947. This seems to indicate that most of the change shown in Table 1 was simply a return to a previous level of persons with no religion.

However, the 1947 percentage reported by Gallup must not be taken at its face value. According to Glenn (1975:Table 1), the Gallup surveys of that era underrepresented nonwhites by at least 5 percentage points, underrepresented Southerners by at least 12 or 13 percentage points,[4] and underrepresented persons with less than 12 years of school by about 10 percentage points—and persons in all of these underrepre-

[4] This is according to the definition of the South used by Gallup, which differs from the census definition.

sented categories were unusually unlikely to say they had no religion. (For instance, in the early 1960s, the percentage of Southern whites reporting no religion was only about half of the percentage for white respondents in the rest of the country, according to Gallup data—Glenn and Hyland, 1967:Table 5.) The representation of women in the 1947 samples is unclear, since Glenn did not report data for that year but showed the 1946 samples to be 37.7% female (substantial underrepresentation) and the 1948 samples to be 49.8% female (adequate representation). In any event, the percentage of American adults with no religion in 1947 was almost certainly somewhat lower than the 6% shown by the Gallup data, though it may have been higher than the 2% or 3% shown for the 1950s and early 1960s.

If much of the change shown in Table 1 was a return to a previous level, that of course does not necessarily mean that the change was counter to the longer-term trend. Fertility was higher and divorce rates were lower in the 1950s than at some previous times, but changes since the 1950s in fertility and divorce have been consistent with longer-term trends. It seems likely that the secularization since the 1950s is also consistent with the longer-term trend, but in view of such evidence as the Middletown data, no very confident conclusion can be made on the issue until more evidence is in.

OTHER INDICATORS OF RELIGIOSITY

I point out above that data on "no religion" responses by themselves are inadequate indicators of the overall trend in religiosity and point out that changes in other parts of the distribution may not conform to, and may even offset, an increase in persons at the lower extreme of religiosity. It is beyond the scope of this paper to consider all available evidence, or even all evidence from national surveys, on the recent trend in religiosity in the U.S., but some of the most directly relevant of the additional evidence can help to assess the meaning of the increase in "no religion" responses.

For instance, it seems useful to look at a dichotomous indicator of religiosity that divides national survey respondents on the upper tail of the distribution to see if movement on the two tails seems always to be consistent or if it is sometimes in opposite directions or unsynchronized. No completely adequate indicator of this kind is available, the best apparently being the percentage of persons who say they attend religious services several times per week. Although frequency of attendance of religious services is not a very good indicator of religiosity, it is probably better at identifying persons at the extremes than at discerning degrees of religiosity between the extremes. For example, it is likely that virtually all of the persons who attend religious

Table 8. Comparison of Lower-Tail and Upper-Tail Dichotomous Indicators of the Religiosity of the U.S. Adult Population, 1972 to 1984

Date	% of Respondents Who Said They Had No Religion	% of Respondents Who Said They Attended Religious Services Several Times a Week
1972	5.2	6.3
1973	6.4	7.5
1974	6.8	7.9
1975	7.6	6.9
1976	7.6	8.9
1977	6.1	8.1
1978	7.8	8.1
1980	7.2	7.5
1982	7.3	8.4
1983	7.3	8.5
1984	7.3	9.3

SOURCE: The General Social Surveys conducted by the National Opinion Research Center.

services several times per week, or who are motivated to say they do so, are highly religious. The main deficiency of this indicator is that not all highly religious persons are included in the category of very frequent attenders, due to such influences as physical disability and heavy work and family responsibilities.

The "frequent attendance" and the "no religion" indicators from the 1972 through 1984 General Social Surveys are compared in Table 8.[5] Since the "no religion" percentage leveled off after 1978, I concentrated on the first seven years of the series and correlated each of the indicators with year and with the other indicator. Both the "frequent attendance" and the "no religion" percentages correlated positively with year (.682 and .645, respectively), and the two indicators correlated positively with one another (.559)—an indication that movement on each tail tended to offset movement on the other tail. That is, as the percentage of persons on the lower extreme of religiosity increased, so did the percentage of persons on the upper extreme. The regression of "frequent attendance" on year was .27 and the regression of "no religion" on year was .29. Since the latter was slightly the higher of the two and the "frequent attendance" percentages were a little farther from zero, the indicated increase in religiosity on the upper tail is not quite as great as the indicated decrease on the lower tail. However, the two indicators may not be equally valid, and thus one cannot be certain that the change on the upper tail did not completely offset the change on the lower one.

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[5] The GSS question on attendance of religious services is: "How often do you attend religious services?" The interviewers were instructed to use the nine coding categories, which range from "never" to "several times a week," as probes if necessary.

After 1978, the "no religion" percentages obviously bore virtually no relationship to year, but the "frequent attendance" percentages continued to increase, the correlation with year being .974 and the regression of the percentages on year being .42. Thus, the two measures together indicate an increase in religiosity from 1980 to 1984.

These findings illustrate the hazards of using as an indicator of an underlying quantitative variable a dichotomous variable that divides the population on one tail of the distribution. One would conclude that religiosity either decreased or increased in the population from 1972 to 1978 depending on which indicator was used. Direct assessment of either set of percentages alone would lead one astray, but routine application of log-linear analysis to either set of data, as is often done in such cases, would lead one even farther astray, since the log-odds would indicate greater change in one direction than would the percentages.

However, the 1972–1978 period is only a small proportion of the three decades covered by the data in Table 1, and it is by no means certain that the overall change since the late 1950s has been toward polarization with little change in mean religiosity. Rather, several other indicators of religiosity from Gallup surveys indicate a probable decline in mean religiosity among adults in the U.S. in recent decades. A recent issue of *The Gallup Report* (The Gallup Organization, 1985) gives trend data on responses to a number of questions concerning religious attitudes and behavior, and if one disregards data collected before the Gallup samples adequately represented all segments of the population, most of the trends indicate a decline in religiosity and the remaining few indicate little or no change. For instance, the data indicate definite declines from the late 1950s or early 1960s to the early 1980s in the percentages of respondents who said that religion can answer all or most of today's problems, that religion was very important in their lives, that they were members of a church or synagogue, that they attended religious services in the past week, that they prayed to God twice a day or more frequently, and that they believed the Bible to be the actual word of God. These trends were very nearly monotonic, although some of the measures reached their lowest point in the late

1970s and increased slightly in the early 1980s. Some of the changes were fairly substantial. For instance, the percentage who said religion can answer all or most of today's problems went from 81 in 1957 to 61 in 1985, the percentage who said religion was very important in their lives went from 70 in 1965 to 56 in 1984, and the percentage who said they believed the Bible to be the actual word of God went from 65 in 1963 to 38 in 1984.

In contrast, there was virtually no change in the percentage who said that they read the Bible at least daily, that they believed Jesus Christ is God, that they believed in Hell, and that they believed in Heaven. Expressed belief in life after death and in God as a universal spirit declined only slightly, but the decline in the latter may be of some importance since the percentages were very close to 100, being 97 or 98 in the late 1950s and the 1960s and 94 or 95 in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

In general, these trend data on religious attitudes, beliefs, and behavior support the inferences made from the trend in "no religion" responses under the assumption that the distribution of religiosity was normal with a constant standard deviation. At least some of the variables, such as stated importance of religion in life, can be considered dichotomous indicators of religiosity, and they changed about as much as dichotomous indicators that divided the distribution near its mean should have changed, according to the inferences reported above. Therefore, it seems that in *this particular case*, and for the total period from the late 1950s to the early 1980s, inferring change in the total distribution of religiosity from change on the lower tail would lead to approximately correct conclusions. Apparently, any trend toward polarization was restricted to a small portion of the total period, or else change on the upper tail did not conform to change in most of the rest of the distribution.

Conclusions

The data presented here on "no religion" responses to U.S. national surveys of course are not conclusive evidence on secularization in this country in recent decades, but when they are considered along with survey data on religious attitudes, beliefs, and behavior, the evidence for secularization is persuasive.

The evidence is not totally consistent with the basic and simple version of the secularization thesis, however, since secularization seems to have ceased in the 1980s and may be reversing. The cessation or reversal may be temporary, but it is inconsistent with the view that continuous secularization is inevitable in modern societies. Even though continued secularization may be inevitable in the long run, there seem to be periodic reactions against it that temporarily slow, stop, or reverse it. One might speculate that since religion serves some basic human needs, a decline in religion will cease or be reversed if the emergence of functional substitutes does not keep pace with the decline.

Furthermore, there remains the problem of reconciling the findings of this study with those from the Middletown III study (Caplow, Bahr, and Chadwick, 1983), which seem to indicate sacralization, or at least no substantial secularization, in recent decades. One might be tempted to dismiss the Middletown data as being from an atypical portion of American society, as indeed they may be. However, Muncie probably is not highly atypical, since the Muncie data and national data that are roughly comparable generally show similar trends. For instance, both show a decline in traditional Christian beliefs and a decline in religious endogamy.[6]

Another way to reconcile the findings of the two studies is to conclude that Caplow and his associates used inadequate indicators of secularization–sacralization. Consider, for instance, the estimate of Caplow et al. that the proportion of total income devoted to religion increased. One might argue that this change was largely a function of an increase in per capita income (in constant dollars) and of a decrease in the proportion of income needed for basic necessities. The proportion of income devoted to some kinds of nonessential secular activities undoubtedly increased also, as did the proportion devoted to some kinds of services now considered to be essential, such as mental health services. Similarly, one might argue that the increase in the proportion of the labor force engaged in religious activity reflects the general expansion of the service sector and the churches' taking on several essentially nonreligious functions, such as marriage counseling, adult education, providing of recreational opportunities, and the like.

Perhaps this argument is too facile; in any event, it is an argument that the findings of Caplow et al. do not necessarily indicate sacralization rather than an argument that considerable secularization has occurred. The fact that the churches have been able to take on additional functions might be considered evidence against secularization.

It seems, therefore, that the only honest conclusion to be reached about recent secularization in the U.S. is that no simple and dogmatic conclusion can be reached. On balance, the evidence indicates that secularization has occurred, but not in a linear fashion, and some forms of religious activity and some dimensions of religiosity may have been quite persistent. The data on "no religion" responses reported here are a useful addition to the evidence on secularization, but a careful and objective assessment of much additional evidence will be required to attain a truly good understanding of what has happened to religion in the U.S. and to the religiosity of the American people during the past several decades.

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[6] For national data on the trend in religious endogamy, see Glenn (1982).

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SOUTH AFRICA'S PRESS RESTRICTIONS

EFFECTS ON PRESS COVERAGE AND PUBLIC OPINION TOWARD SOUTH AFRICA

ELEANOR SINGER AND
JACOB LUDWIG

Abstract The 2 November 1985 ban on photographic and sound recordings by the South African government provided an opportunity to investigate hypotheses concerning the effect of the ban on U.S. media coverage of South Africa and on public opinion toward South Africa. We hypothesized that the ban would result in (1) a decrease in coverage of protest-related stories, (2) a tapering off of the volume of coverage, and (3) a decline in the prominence of the South Africa story. We further hypothesized that (4) all of these effects would be stronger for broadcast than for print media, that (5) if the press ban reduced coverage of events in South Africa, there would be less attentiveness to the South African problem among the general public in the United States, and that (6) sympathy for the black population would decrease as a result of the press restrictions.

We found that the press restrictions did not have the effects predicted, either on press coverage or on United States public opinion. Relative to levels of political violence in South Africa, coverage levels did decline. However, the decline did not occur abruptly in November, but appeared as a continuation of decreases that had already begun in September, prior to the press restrictions.

ELEANOR SINGER is a Senior Research Scientist at the Center for the Social Sciences, Columbia University, and JACOB LUDWIG is a Methodologist/Statistician at the Gallup Organization, Princeton, New Jersey. The authors would like to acknowledge the help of the Gannett Center for Media Studies at Columbia University, where the first author was a resident senior fellow during the preparation of this article. The authors would also like to thank the Gallup Organization for the use of their opinion data, and more specifically to thank Marie Swirsky for manuscript preparation, Coleen McMurray for chart preparation, and Anna Chan for data preparation. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the meetings of the American Association for Public Opinion Research in St. Petersburg, Florida, 1986.

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On 2 November 1985, beset by racial protest, the South African government in Pretoria imposed a ban on photographic and sound recordings of protest activities, with the purported aim of denying protesters an international "stage," and of thus reducing the level of protest activity and violence.

For those interested in issues of press freedom, and in the relationship between news coverage and public opinion, the South African ban constituted a rare natural experiment, which promised the opportunity to investigate several hypotheses. Here we investigate six hypotheses. The first four focus on media reactions to the ban; the final two concern public opinion.

We expected that the press ban would result in a reduction of media coverage of events in South Africa—in part by its effect on the behavior of journalists, but also, and perhaps more important, by its effect on the behavior of those who have the power of "deciding what's news" (Gans, 1979). We assumed that the press restrictions would result in a reduction in the vividness of coverage, and hypothesized that the blandness thus imposed on the South Africa story would lead to other changes. Specifically, we hypothesized that the ban would result in (1) a decrease in coverage of protest-related stories, (2) a tapering off of the overall volume of coverage, and (3) a decline in the prominence of the South Africa story relative to other newsworthy stories.

As we reflected on the probable changes in media coverage that would result from the government restrictions, a fourth hypothesis suggested itself: (4) We expected that the restrictions on photographic and sound recordings would have a stronger effect on broadcast than on print media, since the latter rely less heavily on photographic coverage and still less (if at all) on sound recordings.

The two final hypotheses concern the effects of the press restrictions on U.S. public opinion. (5) The fifth hypothesis derives from the agenda-setting literature (e.g., McCombs and Shaw, 1972, and, especially, Cook et al., 1983; Leff, Protess, and Brooks, 1986) and predicts that, if the press ban results in reduced coverage of events in South Africa, there will be less attentiveness to, or awareness of, the South African problem among the general public living outside of South Africa itself.[1]

Some critics of the press restrictions have argued that their imposition was expressly calculated to soften negative world opinion toward the South African government by censoring graphic depictions of the intensity of the conflict and of the harsh official confrontation and repression of protest activity. That is, if sympathy for the black South African cause (and antipathy for the government) derived from the images of repression shown in U.S. newspapers and on television, the ban would result in a shift in sympathy away from the black population and toward the white government.

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[1] Although agenda setting has generally been operationalized by asking people what they consider "the most important problem facing this country," the term clearly has a more general meaning: that attention by the media makes issues more salient for the public.

(6) Accordingly, we decided to test a sixth hypothesis: that sympathy for the black population would decrease as a result of the press restrictions.

Effects on Media Coverage

Notwithstanding sometimes heroic efforts on the part of individual reporters to get the story out, South African–based journalists—faced with prison sentences of up to ten years or fines up to about $8,000 or both—manifested a prudent willingness to adhere to the letter of the official order. As a result, according to Miriam Lacob, "scenes of violent confrontations between young blacks and South African military and police have largely disappeared from the television screens. The flow of dramatic photographs into newspapers and magazines has slowed to a trickle" (Lacob, 1986). For us, the crucial questions concerned whether the decline in the vividness of coverage possible in South Africa would cause news directors either to reduce the volume or prominence of coverage or to alter the content, and whether the effects would be similar for print and broadcast news.

Peter J. Boyer, whose front-page story in the *New York Times* (on 29 December 1985) bears some responsibility for stimulating this research, quotes the general manager of foreign news for NBC as saying, "We can still tell the story, but like the famine story last year it is a visual story and you need to see it."

Nevertheless, if the assertions of news executives are to be trusted, the media in this country are not only loathe to appear to be easily manipulated by Pretoria, but are also self-consciously committed to maintaining a balance of reporting on world events based on the relative importance of those events. Thus Boyer, in the same article, quotes a vice president of ABC News in New York as saying, "I think there is more of an awareness not to turn down a story from South Africa because it's picture-poor, a marginal story, than with other stories from other areas." The foreign editor of CBS News went so far as to suggest that the restriction might, in a roundabout way, enrich the coverage of the broader story by diverting attention from the more visually compelling symptoms, toward the less dramatic underlying causes. Boyer quotes Dan Rather expressing his confidence in the press with the optimistically inverted aphorism "Words are sometimes worth a thousand pictures."

In order to test our hypotheses about the effects of the press ban on media coverage, we monitored coverage of the South Africa story both in the *New York Times* and on the evening television newscasts of the three major networks, using for this purpose the *New York Times Index* and the Vanderbilt Television News Archive's *News Index and Abstracts*.

From the *Times Index*, stories concerning South Africa were counted (to measure the volume of coverage) and were classified as front page or other (to measure assigned prominence) and as protest or other. Television news stories about South Africa on ABC, CBS, and NBC were likewise counted and classified as protest or other and as falling within the first three minutes of a broadcast or later (to measure assigned prominence). "Protest stories" in both media included all stories focusing on events or incidents of protest or demonstration by blacks in South Africa against the racial policy of apartheid; all other stories were coded as "other."[2]

The *Times*'s coverage of South Africa does not represent "typical" coverage, even among large and relatively internationally oriented newspapers in this country. It was selected because it was expected that its coverage of South Africa (as of international affairs more generally, being "deeper" than most U.S. newspapers in this regard) would be especially sensitive to the South African government's restrictions on the press. However, a replication of the analysis using Newsbank, which indexes newspapers nationwide, leads to conclusions no different from those based on the *Times*.[3]

The opinion data on which we draw later in this paper were obtained in August and October 1985 and March 1986, but we began to monitor trends in media coverage at the beginning of May 1985 and continued

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[2] Examples of protest stories include those about riots, violence against the police and white South Afrikaners, and refusals to follow the restrictive practices of the government. Included in the "other" category were stories about economic sanctions, editorials against apartheid, and demonstrations by U.S. citizens against South African policy. We wish to thank Anastasios Kalomiris and Mary Corcoran for compiling and coding both the print and the television coverage data.

[3] Newsbank (Newsbank, Inc., New Canaan, CT) is a reference service providing access to the contents of newspapers from 100 cities around the country, with an average of two cities per state. (In New York, six cities are covered, with the *Post* and the *News*, but not the *Times*, representing New York City.) Articles of broad interest are selected and reproduced on microfiche each month; a monthly printed index is cumulated quarterly and annually. The distribution of South Africa stories from July 1985 through March 1986 is as follows (only quarterly data were available for July–September 1985 and January–March 1986): July–September 1985—30 protest, 188 other, 218 total; October 1985—3 protest, 16 other, 19 total; November 1985—1 protest, 35 other, 36 total; December 1985—2 protest, 40 other, 42 total; January–March 1986—8 protest, 40 other, 48 total. While this distribution resembles that of television more than that of the *Times*, it offers no more support than either television or the *Times* for the hypothesis that media coverage of South Africa would decline following the press ban.

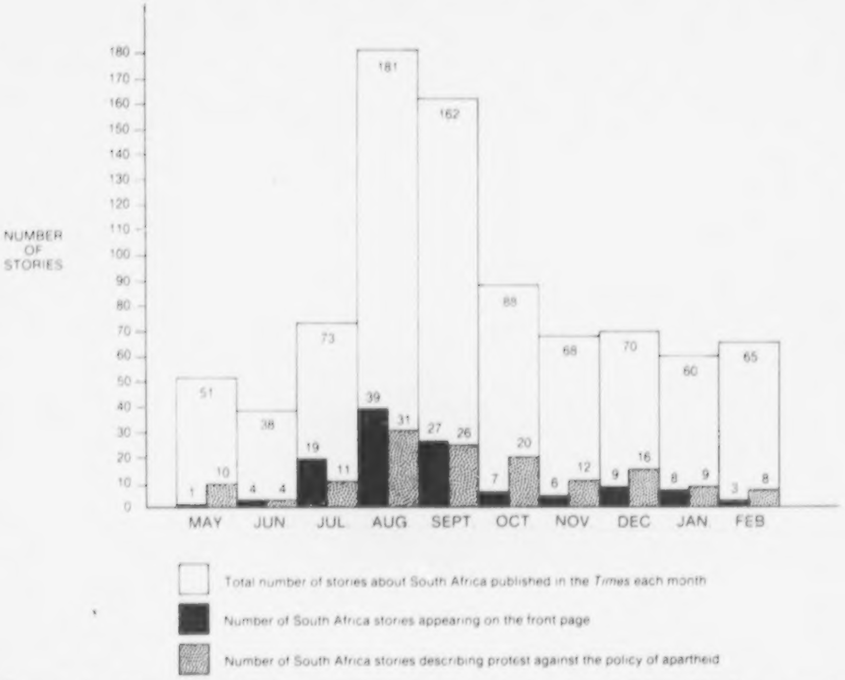

Figure 1. *New York Times* Coverage of South Africa Before and After Imposition of Press Restrictions 2 November 1985 (Source: *New York Times Index*)

to do so through the end of February 1986, four months after the press restrictions had gone into effect. Trends in the *Times*'s coverage are graphed in Figure 1; those in the three evening newscasts, combined, in Figure 2. Each figure graphs the number of protest stories, the total number of stories about South Africa, and the number of these stories which were assigned prominent positions (i.e., front-page or first-three-minute stories).

The first thing to note is that media coverage of events in South Africa did not fall off sharply in November in response to the 2 November press ban. And although fewer stories were carried on TV news than were featured in the *Times*, the overall patterns of variation are rather similar.[4] All three indices (total stories, protest stories, and prominently featured stories) for both media peaked in August, began to decline in September—two months before the imposition of the press restrictions—and continued their decline in October. Four of the six indices (all except for the total number of South Africa stories and

[4] However, the *percentage* of South Africa stories dealing with protest is considerably higher for television (ranging from a high of 87% in July to a low of 33% in February, averaging 58%) than for *Times* coverage (ranging from a high of 30% in July to a low of 6% in January, averaging 15%).

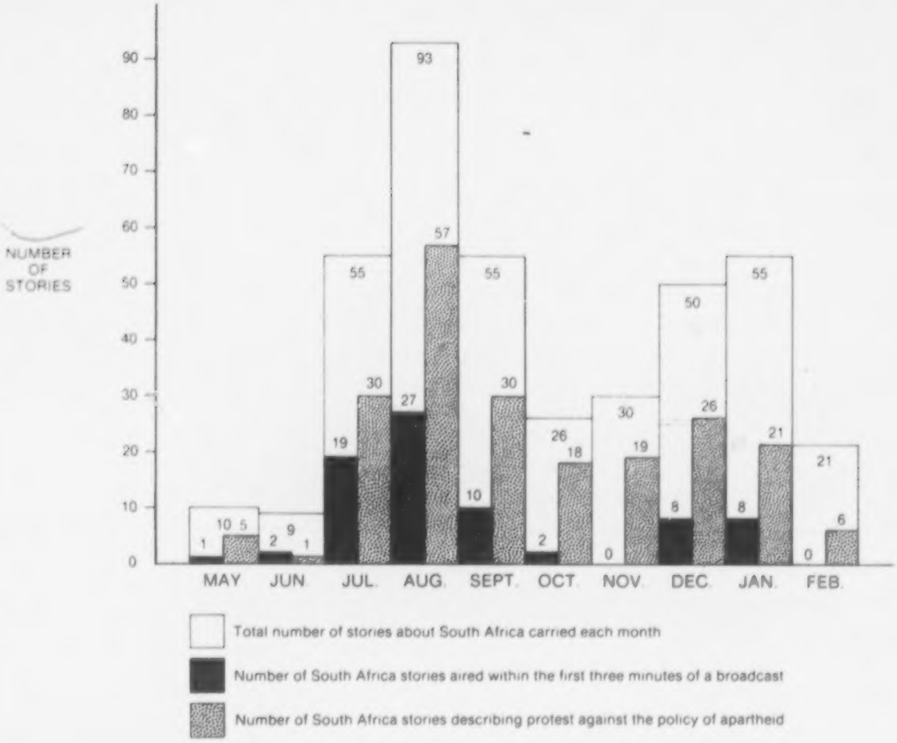

Figure 2. Combined ABC, CBS, and NBC Television News Coverage of South Africa Before and After Imposition of Press Restrictions 2 November 1985 (Source: Vanderbilt News Archive's *News Index and Abstracts*)

the number of protest stories featured on television) declined again in November, but relative to the earlier decreases, these further declines were small. Furthermore, each of the indices showed an upturn in December. The increase was especially marked for television news coverage. Although most of the indices declined from their December levels in January and February, it is not all clear that these changes were related to the press restrictions imposed in November.

But to view these data without regard to the "newsworthiness" of events in South Africa is to leave out a crucial part of the analysis. If the level of conflict there increased dramatically, for example, then a general pattern of stability or decline takes on added significance.[5]

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[5] Even taking account of events in South Africa does not solve the problem, of course. Newsworthiness—perhaps especially for television news, since coverage must be fit into a precisly defined time period—is a relative attribute. The level and (especially) prominence of coverage of a particular event depends not just on its objective importance, but on its *relative* importance compared with other news events.

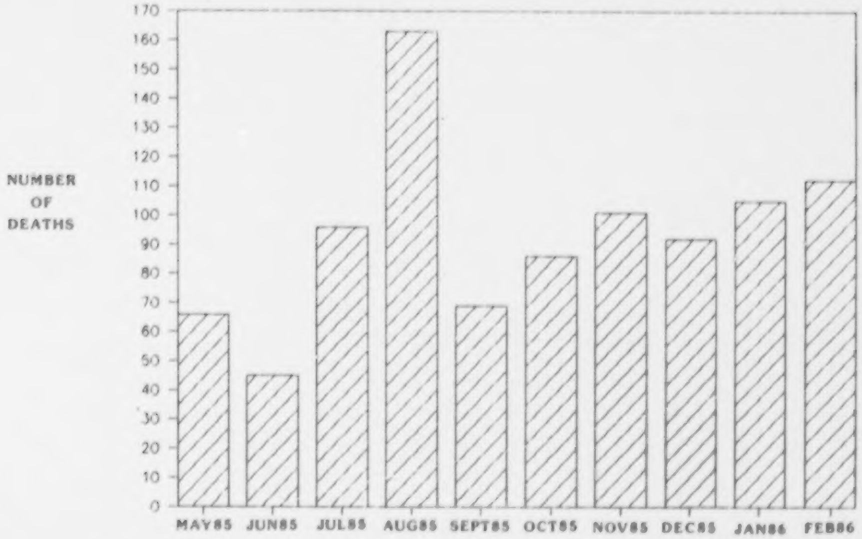

Figure 3. Deaths Relating to Political Violence Before and After Imposition of Press Restrictions 2 November 1985 (Source: The South African Institute of Race Relations)

Conflict is newsworthy. One approximate indicator of the level of political conflict in South Africa is the number of protest-related deaths. Moreover, such a measure also allows us to evaluate the hypothesis put forward by the South African government when it imposed the press restrictions: that, denied an international audience, protest activities would be reduced, leading to a reduction in violence.

Data on political violence in South Africa were obtained from the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR), a private Johannesburg-based organization that monitors and reports on the state of political conflict between the black population and the South African government. Among other kinds of "tracking" activities, SAIRR keeps careful records of the number of persons killed in protest-related violence, and provides these figures to the South African Press Association. Their "death toll" numbers are drawn from police records and reports of deaths culled from a comprehensive set of South African newspapers.[6]

Figure 3 presents these figures for the period from May 1985 through February 1986. Clearly, the data do not lend support to the official contention that the presence of cameras and tape recorders at protest events is an important source of violence, and that banning them would reduce the level of violence.

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[6] The authors are grateful to John Morrison of SAIRR and to Dr. Gavin Stewart of Rhodes University and SAIRR for providing the death count figures, along with detailed descriptions of their sources and procedures.

In order to use the SAIRR death toll figures as a yardstick against which to assess the effect of the press ban on media coverage of South Africa, we employed a difference-of-standard-scores method. All seven indices (three number-of-stories counts—total, prominent, and protest—for television news and the *Times*, and the SAIRR death counts) were transformed into scores with means of zero and variances of 1.0, over the ten-month period covered in the foregoing figures. The standardized death counts for each month were then subtracted from that month's standardized coverage score for each of the six coverage indices. Calculated in this way, the resulting index provides a simple descriptive measure of how closely coverage "tracks" political violence.[7] If, for a particular month, the death toll is exactly average and the number of stories is also exactly average, the difference score will be zero, indicating perfect tracking. The same zero score will result if both measures are one standard deviation above or half a standard deviation below their respective averages. If, on the other hand, the coverage score is higher than the death toll score, the difference score will be positive, indicating relative overcoverage; a negative difference score indicates relative undercoverage.

Figures 4 and 5 plot difference scores (standardized coverage scores minus standardized death counts) for *New York Times* and network television coverage, respectively.

With one exception (prominence on television), all of the difference profiles—and particularly those based on *New York Times* coverage—show the highest degree of overcoverage in September. It is noteworthy that this overcoverage lags just behind the most intense levels of political violence (and the highest coverage levels), as if coverage were subject to a kind of inertia, and maintained its relatively high levels for a time after the political violence had dropped off. All six difference scores declined substantially in October, with prominence dropping below the zero "parity line" in both figures. All six scores declined again in November, when the press ban—according to our expectations—should have suppressed all of the scores most forcefully, but in only one case (protest stories in the *Times*) was the decrease as precipitous as the drop-off observed between September and October. Moreover, all of the difference scores rebounded in December, with the three television-based scores actually exceeding parity levels, and all except for front-page stories in the *Times* exceeding the

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[7] As we have said, the number of protest-related deaths is an approximate indicator of the level of political violence and an even cruder approximation of newsworthiness. Thus, the same number of deaths occurring in one confrontation would be much more newsworthy than an equal number spread over a series of smaller events.

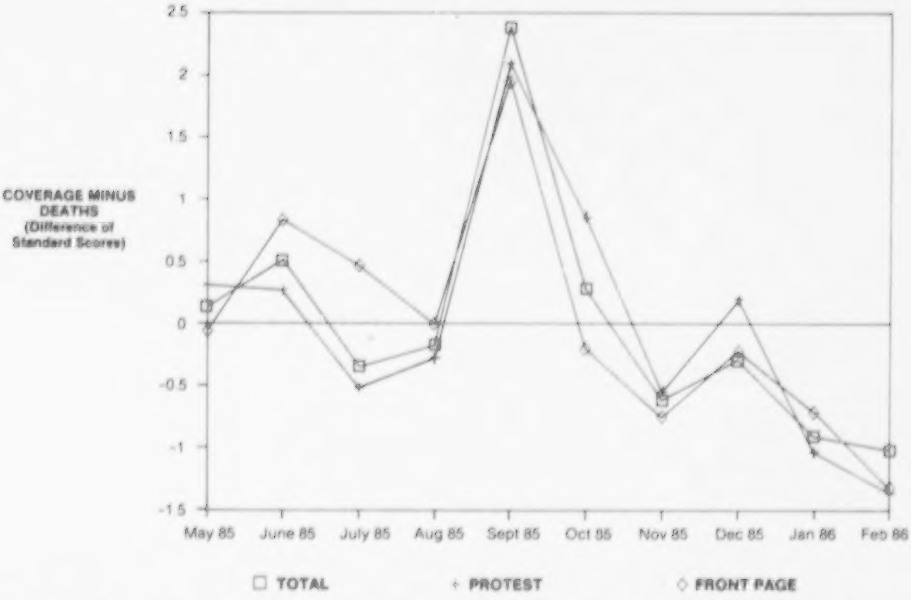

Figure 4. *New York Times* Tracking of Protest Activity Before and After Imposition of Press Restrictions 2 November 1985 (Sources: *New York Times Index*; the South African Institute of Race Relations)

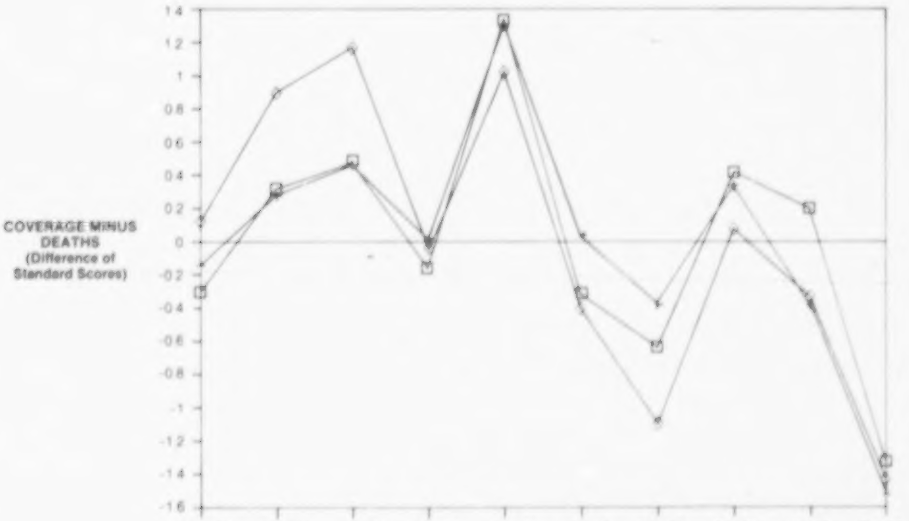

Figure 5. Combined ABC, CBS, and NBC Television Tracking of Protest Activity Before and After Imposition of Press Restrictions 2 November 1985 (Sources: Vanderbilt News Archive's *News Index and Abstracts*; the South African Institute of Race Relations)

lowest levels observed during the pre-ban period. All six difference scores declined in January, and again in February, when they showed the most severe levels of undercoverage observed across the ten-month period from May 1985 to February 1986. But, as we have already noted in discussing the raw coverage figures, it is not at all clear whether undercoverage in January and February can be attributed to the press restrictions imposed at the beginning of November.

What, then, can we conclude about the effect of the press ban on American media's coverage of the South Africa story?

1. First, none of the three indicators we used—total coverage, prominence, and protest-related stories—showed a dramatic decline between October and November, especially when measured against the drop from September to October.
2. But, second, when measured against the amount of protest-related activity that was occurring (as indexed by the SAIRR death count figures), it is clear that coverage tended to drop below par in the four months following the imposition of press restrictions, whereas it had tended toward overcoverage in the six preceding months. Whether this relative decline is attributable to the press ban, to the "natural decline" of the South Africa story, or to a flux of competing news is a question we cannot answer from the data we have.
3. As for Hypothesis 4 (that the effects of the ban would be more visible for television coverage than for *Times* coverage), the data presented in Figures 4 and 5 show no support for it. Indeed, for each of the three coverage indices, the decline from pre-ban to post-ban coverage was at least marginally greater for the *Times* than for television news coverage, and the difference between media is quite marked in the case of total number of stories.

Effects on Public Opinion

U.S. public opinion about the South African situation was assessed in three surveys conducted by The Gallup Organization over an eight-month period in 1985 and 1986, spanning the crucial 2 November date.

The first survey was fielded in mid-August 1985, approximately two and one-half months before the press restrictions were imposed and at the height of the pre-ban level of violence in South Africa; the second was conducted in mid-October, just a few weeks before the official edict. The third survey measurement was made in early March of 1986, approximately four months after the ban was announced.[8] We originally thought of the first two surveys as giving us an indication of the stability of opinion about South Africa; the timing of the third was dictated by the schedule of Gallup omnibus surveys.[9] In the first and third surveys, a national random-digit telephone sample of 1000 adults was interviewed as part of the regular Gallup telephone omnibus, while the second measurement involved face-to-face interviews with adults in a representative national sample of 1500 households contacted as part of the regular Gallup personal omnibus survey.[10]

[8] The Gallup personal and telephone omnibus designs are based on probability samples down to the block/small geographic segment level and the household level, respectively. Below this level the samples are based on quotas by sex: interviewer assignments require that a specific number of interviews be conducted with men and a specific number with women in each of the Gallup Organization's sampling locations (of which there are over 350). For the telephone survey, the last two digits of the telephone number are regenerated for listed telephone numbers falling within the geographic areas that were selected as primary sampling areas for Gallup's personal surveys. In the August 1985 telephone omnibus 1009 interviews were completed, and 1297 potential respondents refused to be interviewed. The parallel ratio for the March 1986 telephone survey was 1004/1365. For the October 1985 personal survey, the ratio was 1540/1990. Personal omnibus survey data are weighted to Census Bureau (Current Population Survey) parameters for adults 18 years and older in the U.S. population; telephone survey data are weighted to parameters for adults in telephone households.

[9] Research on time lags in agenda setting suggests that opinion data are most strongly correlated with the preceding two months of media content (Winter and Eyal, 1981). This suggests that the October opinion measure reflected media content from mid-August to mid-October (when coverage was declining) and the March measure, from mid-January to mid-March (when *Times* coverage was stable and television coverage was declining). But since media coverage did not show the predicted decline subsequent to 2 November, the question of whether the post-ban opinion measure was delayed too long to capture the effects of declining coverage is moot.

[10] This mixture of survey modes is unfortunate from a research design point of view since it is not possible to rule out a mode of interview effect, but we have no reason to believe that our analysis suffers from such an effect. In describing the results of perhaps the most closely controlled experimental comparison of telephone and face-to-face interviewing modes, Groves and Kahn (1979:118) reach the conclusion that their measurements of public opinion on social issues across modes show no significant evidence of a mode effect. They do note a weak trend toward higher levels of missing data in the telephone mode, but no consistent evidence of this effect is visible in our data.

More persuasively, we performed two analyses to investigate whether differences in the characteristics of respondents interviewed in the personal and telephone surveys could have affected our trend results. First, we deleted respondents who said that they had no telephone from our October personal survey dataset. Retabulation of the October data presented in Tables 1–3 after deletion of these (119) respondents has almost no effect on these data: no single percentage in any of these tables changes by more than two percentage points (and only one percentage changes by this much). We took the additional step of reweighting this restricted dataset to our telephone omnibus parameters for education, age, race, sex, and region, taking special care that the education distribution (education being the most likely culprit in personal–telephone mode effects) matched that of the March telephone omnibus dataset exactly. The retabulation of these reweighted data again provides no evidence that the mode of data collection affected our October results: the largest change from the percentages reported in Tables 1–3 was one percentage point.

Table 1. How Closely Followed Recent Events in South Africa

	13–15 August 1985	11–14 October 1985	4–10 March 1986
Very closely	17%	13%	13%
Fairly closely	46	43	43
Not very closely	36	40	44
No opinion (Vol.)	1	4	0
Number of interviews	1009	1540	1004

SOURCE: The Gallup Organization, Inc.

QUESTION: "How closely would you say you've followed the recent events in South Africa—very closely, fairly closely, or not very closely?"

In each of the three surveys, the series of questions about South Africa began with a question about attentiveness:

> How closely would you say you've followed the recent events in South Africa—very closely, fairly closely, or not very closely?

The marginal results for each of the three time points are presented in Table 1.

The attentiveness figures in Table 1 provide no support for Hypothesis 5—that is, there is no indication that attentiveness to events in South Africa declined as a result of the 2 November press ban. They do, however, provide modest support for the more general hypothesis underlying this specific formulation. Between August and October, both print and television coverage of South Africa showed a substantial decline, and attentiveness during that period, as measured by the percentage of those following events there either very or fairly closely, showed a more modest but statistically significant drop ($p < .01$).[11]

No further decline in attentiveness is noticeable between October and March, nor does media coverage show a clear direction during that period—although television coverage first surpasses (in December and Janaury) and then (in February) drops below its October level, as can be seen in Figure 2.

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[11] This and all tests of significance reported subsequently are two-tailed *t*-tests, using an estimated design effect of 1.7 to correct the tests for the effects of the clustered sampling design and the weighting of the data. The strict applicability of the calculations, of course, depends on the approximation of our probability/quota design to a complete probability design.

Table 2. Sympathies in the South African Conflict

	12–15 August 1985	11–14 October 1985	4–10 March 1986
Black population	59%	50%	64%
South African gov't	11	11	12
White population (Vol.)	1	1	0
Both equally (Vol.)	4	10	5
Neither (Vol.)	3	7	3
No opinion (Vol.)	23	20	15
Number of interviews	1009	1540	1004

SOURCE: The Gallup Organization, Inc.
QUESTION: "In the South African situation, are your sympathies more with the black population or more with the South African government?"

Hypothesis 6 asserted that opinion toward the black South African population, highly favorable in the summer of 1985, would become less favorable as vivid depictions of official repression disappeared. The hypothesis was tested with data from the same three Gallup surveys already cited above. All three asked a question about sympathies in the South African conflict:

> In the South African situation, are your sympathies more with the black population or more with the South African government?

Table 2 presents the distribution of responses to this question in each of the three surveys.

The percentage expressing sympathy for the black population declined significantly ($p < .005$) between August and October, only to increase again significantly ($p < .005$) between October and March. This volatility stands in sharp contrast to the trend in the percentage expressing sympathy for the South African government, which shows no change at all over the three measurements.

Instead, the decline in the percentage saying they are sympathetic toward the black population coincides with an increase in the percentage of those expressing equivocal opinions, especially those volunteering that they are sympathetic toward "both equally." By the same token, the increase in sympathy for the black cause in the March survey coincides with a decrease in equivocation.

The decline in sympathy for the black population from August to

October, and the increase in those expressing support for both the white government and the black population (or for neither), appears to be consistent with the reasoning behind Hypothesis 6. That is, a decline in coverage of confrontation is accompanied by reduced sympathy for blacks, though not by increased sympathy for the white government. However, between October and March, there is a significant increase in sympathy for blacks, without any corresponding increase in coverage.[12] Thus, the relationship between amount of coverage of events in South Africa and sympathy is clearly not a simple one.[13]

In order to explore further the relation between attentiveness to events in South Africa and sympathy for the black population, the total sample at each of the three time points was separated into those who said they had followed recent events in South Africa either ''very'' or ''fairly'' closely (whom we will call the ''attentive'' group), and those who said ''not very closely'' (the ''not-attentive'' group). Table 3 presents the distribution of responses to the sympathy question across the three waves separately for the attentive and the not-attentive subgroups.

The most important finding in Table 3 is that the August to October decline in sympathy for the black population is almost entirely due to the not-attentive group: the percentage expressing sympathy for the black population among those who say they have been following the South Africa story closely shows no statistically significant change between the August and October measurements. Between October and March, sympathy for the black population increases among both the attentives and the not-attentives, although the increase is larger for the latter group.

Summary and Conclusion

1. The South African government's restrictions on press coverage of protest activities did not have the effects predicted, either on the level of violence in South Africa or on United States public opinion toward the black population. There was no reduction in violence in South Africa and no reduction in attentiveness or decrease in sympathy for blacks by the American public in the wake of the press restrictions.

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[12] Although television coverage in general actually undergoes first an increase and then a decrease during this period, the index that is most central to Hypothesis 6—number of protest stories—shows a pattern that is probably better described as relatively stable at first (through January) and then declining (in February).

[13] The variable most obviously omitted from consideration is South Africa–related events occurring in the United States during this period.

Table 3. Sympathies in the South African Conflict Separately by Attentiveness

	12–15 August 1985		11–14 October 1985		4–10 March 1986	
	Not Attentive	Attentive	Not Attentive	Attentive	Not Attentive	Attentive
Black population	46%	67%	34%	63%	53%	74%
South African government	11	11	9	13	12	11
Both equally (Vol.)	3	4	9	12	2	7
Neither (Vol.)	4	3	9	5	5	2
White population (Vol.)	0	1	1	1	0	0
No opinion (Vol.)	37	14	38	6	28	5
Number of interviews	361	648	647	893	424	580

Source: The Gallup Organization, Inc.

Question: "In the South African situation, are your sympathies more with the black population or more with the South African government?"

Note: The attentive group comprises those who have followed recent events in South Africa "very" or "fairly" closely.

On the contrary, the number of protest-related deaths in South Africa, as reported by the South African Institute for Race Relations, showed a gradual increase between September and February, following a sharp decline from August to September. And U.S. sympathy for the black population increased significantly between October and March after showing a significant decline between August and October.

2. The main reason for the lack of change in attentiveness on the part of the American public appears to be that the absolute *amount* of coverage of South Africa in U.S. media was not sufficiently affected by the press ban. News coverage of South Africa (whether indexed by the total number of stories, the number of stories depicting protest, or the number receiving prominent placement, and whether television news or *New York Times* coverage is used as the criterion) had already declined sharply in September and October from its August levels; it declined only insignificantly further in November, and actually increased in December.

3. However, *relative to political violence* (as indexed by the number

of protest-related deaths), coverage levels have declined since the ban. In that sense, our first three hypotheses (that the press ban would result in decreased coverage of protest in South Africa, a decrease in the prominence of those stories that were presented, and an overall decrease in the coverage of the South Africa story) were supported. However, the support was weaker than expected, and the decline in coverage (relative to levels of political violence) did not occur abruptly in November, as expected. Rather, the November decreases appeared as a continuation of decreases that had already begun in September, prior to the press restrictions.

But had it not been for the ban, coverage might have kept pace with political violence, and under those circumstances we might have seen an increase in attentiveness between October and March, instead of the plateau we in fact observed.

4. Our hypothesis that broadcast news coverage would be more affected than print media coverage is not supported when the hypothesis is evaluated on the basis of our monthly coding of total number of stories, number of protest stories, and number of prominent stories for both television news (ABC, NBC, and CBS networks combined) and *New York Times* and Newsbank coverage. It is possible that there really were different effects of the ban on broadcast and print media, and that we might have captured them if we had focused our attention on other variables (e.g., the use of photographs) or used a different coding of content.

5. Although we can demonstrate no effects of the *press ban* on public opinion, there is some support for the existence of a relationship between *media coverage* and attentiveness. The number of stories about South Africa, as well as the number given prominent placement and the number devoted to protest, dropped sharply both on television and in the *Times* between August and October. During that period, attentiveness to events in South Africa declined significantly. The changes in coverage following the press ban were much less dramatic, and there were no further changes in attentiveness.

6. Sympathy for the black population in South Africa, like coverage and attentiveness, declined between August and October. But sympathy for blacks increased substantially between the October and March surveys, even though there was no consistent increase in the overall amount of coverage, the prominence of coverage, or the amount of coverage devoted to protest activities during that period of time. Thus, while a decline in coverage may result in a decline in sympathy for the black population, an increase in coverage is clearly not required for an increase in sympathy to occur.

One possible explanation for the increase in sympathy after the press ban is that even without vivid exposure and dramatic photographs, the story was getting through. (Ironically, some journalists said that interest in the South Africa story had been waning in the weeks before the ban, and that the imposition of press restrictions stimulated a renewal of attention.) In response to a question asked in the March survey ("In the last few months do you think protest activities in South Africa have increased, remained about the same, or decreased?"), only 13% of respondents said they believed that the violence in South Africa had abated. Among the attentive especially, there was a (correct) perception that the level of protest had actually increased (45% of attentives answered "increased," compared with 31% of the not-attentives). And Miriam Lacob (1986) notes that South Africa was still receiving substantially more coverage in the United States than almost any other international story. Influences other than the media's coverage of events in South Africa—e.g., protests in the United States and talk of sanctions against the South African government—may also have played a role.

Taking into account the findings reported here, what can we say more generally about the relation between media coverage of an issue and public opinion? To what extent, if any, is the volume of media attention to an issue effective in placing it on the public agenda? And what is the relation between the content and amount of media coverage of an issue and the direction of public opinion on that issue?

Earlier research on agenda setting has come to differing conclusions on these questions, depending at least in part on the methods used by the researchers. So far as issue salience is concerned, studies using time series analysis—the regression of one series of independently derived measurements on another, e.g., the amount of media attention to an issue during a specified period and mention of that issue as a "most important problem" by cross-sectional samples during the same or a lagged period—generally find large effects of media attention on public awareness (e.g., Funkhouser, 1973; MacKuen and Coombs, 1981). So do laboratory experiments of agenda-setting effects (Iyengar, Peters, and Kinder, 1982). On the other hand, studies regressing the salience of an issue to an *individual* on that individual's attention to media coverage of that issue have tended to find much smaller, more qualified effects (e.g., Erbring, Goldenberg, and Miller, 1980). The same is true of those studies employing field experimental procedures and measurement of issue salience before and after exposure to a media campaign (e.g., Cook et al., 1983; Leff, Protess, and Brooks, 1986).

As for the effects of media content on public attitudes toward an issue, the findings have been generally muted, though some studies—

e.g., Ball-Rokeach, Rokeach, and Grube, 1984, and Cook et al., 1983—have reported such effects even after relatively modest media stimuli.

Our own data suggest that, paradoxically, the media affect primarily those who ordinarily pay them little heed. The public that defines itself as "attentive" at any given time, we believe, is made up of two groups. The first and, in our study, larger group consists of those whose attentiveness to an issue is rooted in their social and demographic characteristics (e.g., education, friends who are interested in politics), and is largely independent of media attention. The second, smaller group becomes attentive to an issue when the media give it a good deal of play, and loses interest again when the media's attention shifts to another issue. Thus the total size of the attentive group for an issue fluctuates with the amount of media attention to that issue, although its core consists of individuals who are relatively unaffected by such fluctuations.

Furthermore, we hypothesize that it is the media-instigated attentives—those whose interest in an issue is captured only by dramatic media coverage—whose attitudes are more likely to be influenced by the amount and content of such coverage. Thus, in our study, sympathy toward blacks in South Africa dropped between August and October—a period during which the total amount of media coverage as well as the prominence of the story and the coverage devoted to protest activity dropped dramatically. But sympathy toward blacks dropped primarily among those who said that they had not been paying a great deal of attention to events in South Africa, a group that increased as the volume of media coverage declined.

This finding accords with research by Iyengar, Peters, and Kinder (1982), who found that those who "counterargued" (internally) while watching a series of television newscasts in a laboratory setting were less influenced by the television agenda than those who did not counterargue. The "counterarguers" were the politically involved: they had a higher level of political knowledge, were more active politically, and claimed to follow public affairs closely. "Those with little political information to begin with," Iyengar and his colleagues state, "are most vulnerable to agenda-setting."[14]

More generally then, our study suggests the influence of the media "at the margin"—among those whose knowledge about, and interest in, an issue depends largely, if not entirely, on media attention. Depending on the issue, of course, this group may at times be uncomfortably large.

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[14] Iyengar, Peters, and Kinder (1982) argue from their experiment that large agenda-setting effects exist, ignoring the fact that, were it not for a $20 incentive, their low-involved subjects would be unlikely to watch a week's worth of television news without interruption. They also ignore the role of events in shaping the media's agenda, claiming that in deciding what to cover, "editors and journalists are influenced most by organizational routines, internal power struggles, and commercial imperatives" (p. 855)!

Postscript

Since November 1985, the South African government has several times tightened its restrictions on the press. In June 1986 the restrictions were extended to coverage of violence that did not involve photographic or audio equipment; unlike the earlier restrictions, these rules were viewed as aimed primarily at print journalists. In December 1986 the restrictions were broadened again, and journalists were told to submit reports of protest in writing for formal censorship. On 30 January 1987 the police commissioner was authorized to ban publication of "any matter." The Johannesburg bureau chief of the *New York Times* was expelled from South Africa in January, and his designated successor was not permitted to enter the country.

According to Alex S. Jones, writing in the *New York Times* of 1 March 1987 (p. 20), these restrictions have succeeded in reducing coverage of news from South Africa both in print and on television between June 1986 and January 1987. Thus, our relatively optimistic conclusions about the effects of the initial press restrictions may have to be tempered in light of subsequent developments, although our experience with the coverage data presented in this paper leads us to be wary of over-time comparisons limited to a specific pair of months. In any event it is clear from the results of the Gallup Organization telephone omnibus ($N = 1015$) fielded in March 1987 that public opinion has not been strongly affected. Attentiveness has shown, at most, a marginal decline compared with the March 1986 reading reported in Table 1 ($.10 > p > .05$), and there have been no changes in sympathy of even borderline statistical significance based on the same 12-month comparison ($p > .10$).

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THE DEMOGRAPHICS OF A NEW VOTING GAP

MARITAL DIFFERENCES IN AMERICAN VOTING

HERBERT F. WEISBERG

Abstract There is now a marriage gap in presidential voting in the United States, with married people voting about 10%–15% more Republican than unmarried people. This voting difference developed in the 1972 election, and it is also evident in party identification. The proportion of unmarried people has doubled since 1964, so this cleavage is important. The gap can be explained statistically in terms of race and income, but still may give politicians the opportunity to gain votes by appealing to voters on the basis of family issues.

Survey researchers have long probed social group differences in voting. They have come to expect certain demographic variables to be related to the vote while others are seen as so irrelevant that they are never examined. Yet familiar voting cleavages can diminish in importance, while new differences can emerge. We generally think of social group differences in the vote as resulting from divergent issue appeals or from mobilization of groups into parties by group leaders, and such appeals and mobilization would be noticed enough for us to look specifically for their effects. However, group voting differences can also emerge more subtly because of the changing demographics of the population. As a result, it is important for us to examine periodically the full range of social group differences in voting.

When one so examines voting in the 1984 American presidential election, one finds the largest voting differences on the basis of race and income, followed in order by differences based on marital status, religion, gender, and region. These differences are familiar ones, ex-

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cept for the unexpected marital difference. In the 1984 presidential election, Ronald Reagan won 63% of the vote of married people, compared to just 51% of the vote of unmarried people. These figures, as well as others in this report, are based on the 1984 American National Election Study, conducted by the University of Michigan's Center for Political Studies (CPS), but an identical difference was obtained in the exit poll of 8,696 voters taken by the *New York Times*/CBS News Poll (New York Times, 1984; Dowd, 1984).

In part, this "marriage gap" may be due to differing appeals by the parties. The Republican party has relied in recent elections more on "family issues," and thus it may appeal more strongly to the family vote. But an understanding of this new voting difference requires an understanding of the changing demographics of American society during this period. The purpose of this article is to describe the marriage gap in voting, while placing it in its appropriate demographic setting.

The Nature of the Marriage Gap in Voting

The marriage gap was not new in 1984. Looking back at the CPS surveys for the last several elections, there was little difference in the presidential voting of married and unmarried people in 1964 or 1968, but the current marriage gap developed in 1972 with a 15% voting difference in that election (see Table 1). In 1976 and 1980, the married vote was 9%–10% more Republican than the unmarried vote among those voting for the two major party candidates. Table 1 shows the 1964–1984 Republican presidential vote proportion by detailed categories of marital status. While the differences are sometimes small, since 1972 each category of unmarried voters has voted less Republican than have married voters.

While the marriage gap has existed since 1972, it has received little notice. The first public attention (Clymer, 1983; Plissner, 1983) followed its detection in the exit polls taken by the *New York Times* and CBS News for the 1982 election. There has been even less scholarly notice of the marriage gap. Indeed, marital status has rarely been examined as a predictor of voting, except for Carroll's (1986) discussion of the voting difference between married and single women in 1980 and 1982.

The magnitude of the marriage gap is middling. It is much smaller than the differences in voting between whites and blacks (the former more Republican by 54% in 1984), between rich and poor Americans, and between Protestants and Jews (30%), but it regains some importance in that more voters are unmarried than are black, in poverty, or Jewish. Furthermore, in 1984 the marriage gap was somewhat larger

Table 1. Republican Vote by Marital Status, 1964–1984

	1964	1968	1972	1976	1980	1984
Married	32.1%	54.2%	68.6%	51.6%	59.0%	62.6%
	(1825)	(2676)	(2456)	(2370)	(1246)	(1798)
Unmarried	32.3%	52.6%	53.5%	41.6%	49.9%	50.8%
	(353)	(719)	(776)	(788)	(479)	(815)
Never married	34.4%	55.2%	48.5%	45.1%	51.3%	47.2%
	(125)	(290)	(412)	(338)	(224)	(371)
Widowed	33.3%	56.4%	67.9%	44.0%	49.2%	48.9%
	(162)	(296)	(218)	(225)	(124)	(174)
Divorced	26.2%	52.9%	56.1%	37.4%	49.0%	59.8%
	(42)	(87)	(98)	(153)	(96)	(184)
Separated	25.0%	11.4%	26.1%	26.9%	48.0%	51.2%
	(24)	(44)	(46)	(73)	(25)	(43)
Unmarried couple living together	—	—	—	—	—	51.2%
						(43)

Source: American National Election Studies. All data are weighted by the number of adults in the household.

Notes: Entries show the Republican percentage of the two-party vote. Numbers of cases are shown in parentheses. No value is given when there are 10 or fewer cases in a cell.

than most other social group voting differences which traditionally are considered important, including those between Protestants and Catholics (9% difference), between men and women (7%), and between northern and southern whites (−4%).

The importance of the marriage gap is increased by the fact that 36% of the eligible electorate were unmarried in 1984.[1] Furthermore, this voting difference is amplified by a turnout difference: married people vote in greater proportions than unmarried (by 11% according to these 1984 data).

This voting difference did not develop separately from ideology or partisanship. Married people are about 13% more likely to be conservative in politics than are the unmarried. Married people are also about

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[1] The results in this paper are weighted by the number of adults in the household (Kish, 1965). This weighting is usually skipped because it generally has little effect on results, but it is important here since there is an obvious relationship between marital status and number of adults in the household. Actually, as Hess (1985:55) found, the weighting had little effect on most attitudinal results but did affect demographics such as the proportion of people who are married. The National Election Studies sample overstates the proportion married by about 3% when compared to 1984 Census estimates (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1984), mainly at the expense of the never marrieds.

8% more likely to be Republican in their party identification, a difference that has existed since 1972.

The marriage gap is exacerbated by the more familiar (and smaller) gender gap. A gender gap emerged in the 1980 election, with more men than women voting for Reagan, and that gender gap remained intact in the 1984 election. Reagan did best with married men (65.9% of their vote in 1984), next with married women (59.5%), then unmarried men (55.8%), and worst with unmarried women (47.7%).

The Demographic Basis of the Marital Gap

Understanding the development of the marriage gap requires knowledge of the changing demographics of marriage in the United States. In the last two decades, the proportion of unmarried voters doubled, from about 18% of the public in 1964 to 36% in 1984. This reflects many trends at the same time. Granting the vote to 18- to 20-year-olds increased the number of young voters who were never married. The median age of first marriage by 1984 was 23 for women and 25 for men, the highest values since the turn of the century.[2] The postponement of marriage further increased the number of unmarried voters. The divorce ratio (defined by the Census Bureau as the number of currently divorced persons per 1,000 currently married persons who live with their spouses) more than tripled since 1960, jumping from 35 to 121 in 1984. This increase in divorces and separations added further to the unmarried voter pool. Additionally, the number of unmarried couples in the United States approached two million by 1984, triple the value of 1970. Putting all of these increases together, the marriage gap emerged just as the number of unmarried voters became large enough to have important political effects.

The marriage gap, however, differs fundamentally from more common demographic differences in voting. Most demographic differences result from early socialization, as when religious or ethnic groups are socialized distinctly into the party system. By contrast, marital status is obviously not due to early life socialization. Instead, the marital status differences are due to decisions and events from the teenage period through middle and old age. The changes in life situations from never-married to married and then to separated, divorced, or widowed could still have political effects, but we should be suspicious of whether the marital voting differences are totally due to changes in marriage situations. This raises the issue of whether the marriage gap is simply a reflection of other voting differences.

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[2] The demographic statistics in the text of this paragraph are from U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1984. Klein (1984: chap. 4) provides a perceptive discussion of changing patterns of marriage set within the political context.

Race, gender, and age are three demographic variables antecedent to marriage that must be considered in exploring the nature of the marriage–vote relationship. Since age has a curvilinear relationship with marriage, it will be broken into five categories: 18–24, 25–34, 35–44, 45–64, and 65 and over. In the regression analysis that follows, separate dummy variables are included for the two younger and two older age ranges.

Model I in Table 2 shows the results of a path analysis of the 1984 Reagan vote. Only significant paths are included. The first equation shows that marriage is indeed related to age (with lower rates of marriage for the youngest and oldest age categories), race, and gender. The second equation shows that marriage retains significant exploratory power when included as a predictor of vote along with race, gender, and age. Race has the greatest effect, with marriage next (b = .075, with a standard error of .022), while gender[3] and age are less significant.

Race renders the marriage gap partially spurious. Marital status differs markedly by race. In 1984, about two-thirds of whites were married compared to only one-third of blacks. Since blacks have been voting overwhelmingly Democratic in recent elections, this racial difference in marriage rates induces a voting difference between married and unmarried people. The marriage gap in 1984 decreases by half upon controlling for race: instead of an overall 12% marriage gap, married whites voted Republican more than unmarried whites by 6% (significant), and married blacks voted Republican more than unmarried blacks by 4% (not significant). As the middle columns of Table 3 show, racial differences help account for the marriage gap in the elections of 1972–1984, but a marriage gap persists among whites.[4]

Income is the other relevant factor in understanding the marriage gap (Clymer, 1983; Dowd, 1984). It is a critical intervening variable in the relationship between marriage and vote. As Model II in Table 2 shows, family income is a key determinant of the 1984 presidential vote (see also Wattenberg, 1985), and income varies by marital status. In part, this reflects the higher family incomes for married couples when both are employed outside of the house, while unmarried voters are generally limited to a single income. Race, age, and gender have direct effects on income in addition to their indirect effects through their effects on marital status. Race still has a direct effect on vote when

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[3] It is unnecessary to examine gender more carefully, as the marriage gap does not substantially change with gender controlled.

[4] By contrast, the marriage gap among blacks is generally insignificant and inconsistent in direction and so will not be considered further here.

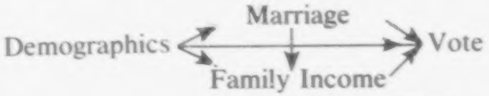
Table 2. Path Analysis of 1984 Reagan Vote

Model I

Demographics→Marriage→Vote

	Marriage	Reagan Vote
White	.150***	.321***
Male	.064***	.047*
Age		
18–24	–.380***	.054*
25–34	–.047*	
45–64		
>64	–.116***	
Married		.071***
R-squared	.177***	.111***

Model II



	Marriage	Family Income	Reagan Vote
White	.150***	.162***	.294***
Male	.064***	.091***	
Age			
18–24	–.380***		.054*
25–34	–.047*	–.067**	
45–64		–.062*	
> 64	–.116***	–.333***	.061*
Married		.221***	
Income			.169***
R-squared	.177***	.206***	.141***

Source: 1984 American National Election Study. All data are weighted by the number of adults in the household.
Notes: Entries are path coefficients for recursive models shown above. Values are given only for significant paths.
$^{*}p < .05$. $^{**}p < .01$. $^{***}p < .001$.

Table 3. Marriage Gap by Race and Income, 1972–1984

	Overall	Whites	Blacks	Whites, with Income Controlled
1972	15.1**	8.0**	8.9*	5.5*
	(3232)	(2932)	(257)	(2860)
1976	10.0**	9.4**	−4.1	3.2
	(2578)	(2840)	(228)	(2659)
1980	9.1**	5.4	−.7	5.9
	(1725)	(1510)	(203)	(1364)
1984	11.8**	6.0**	4.3	−1.3
	(2613)	(2324)	(234)	(2105)

SOURCE: American National Election Studies. All data are weighted by the number of adults in the household.

NOTES: Entries are regression slopes, showing the differences between the Republican proportion of the two-party vote among married people and the same among unmarried people.

$^{*}p < .05$. $^{**}p < .01$.

income is included in the equation, but marriage no longer has a significant direct effect. Marital status affects voting mainly through the income differences between married and unmarried people.

If the marriage gap is partially explained by race and family income taken separately, it disappears completely when both factors are taken into account. In separate regression analyses for whites in 1972, 1976, 1980, and 1984, marital status does not have an impact on the vote when family income is included in the equations. The last column of Table 3 gives the regression slopes; they are inconsistent in sign and generally not significant. Table 4 shows the Reagan vote for whites in

Table 4. Reagan Proportion of 1984 White Vote, by Family Income and Marital Status

Family Income	Married (*N*)	Unmarried(*N*)
<$7,000	45.2% (42)	46.2% (91)
$7–14,000	52.1% (165)	54.5% (123)
$14–30,000	62.9% (539)	60.8% (166)
$30–60,000	68.7% (630)	63.9% (144)
>$60,000	83.6% (152)	79.2% (53)

SOURCE: 1984 American National Election Study. All data are weighted by the number of adults in the household.

1984 by income and marital status. There is some indication of interaction here, with Reagan doing better among lower-income unmarrieds and higher-income marrieds, but the main message is that voting differences between married and unmarried whites of the same income category are small and inconsistent in direction. The breakdown by income for blacks is not shown since the marriage gap is not significant among blacks.

Thus, the marriage gap is largely a combination of racial and income voting differences. When Democratic politicians appeal to blacks and poor people while Republican leaders appeal to whites and richer Americans, the demographics of marriage lead to a marriage gap in voting.

Conclusions

A marriage gap in voting developed in the 1972 election and has persisted through 1984. Married people are now regularly voting more Republican than single people by 10%–15%. This voting difference partly reflects the differing racial bases of the parties and partly reflects the income differences in their support coalitions.

This statistical explanation obviously reduces the political significance of the marriage gap. However, the marriage gap can be relevant politically, even if it can be accounted for statistically by the demographics of marital status. Party leaders who now find that their traditional racial and income appeals have led to a marriage gap in voting may choose to focus their appeals more directly on family issues that would increase this division (Fineman, 1986). Thus, changing demographics provide the political parties with new opportunities as well as new challenges.

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THE ILLUSION OF INTIMACY
TELEVISION AND THE ROLE OF CANDIDATE PERSONAL QUALITIES IN VOTER CHOICE

SCOTT KEETER

Abstract The role of television in the increased candidate orientedness of voters in U.S. presidential elections was examined using data from eight National Election Studies conducted by the Survey Research Center at The University of Michigan. The importance of candidate personal qualities and traits was estimated using voter responses to open-ended questions about the candidates. Candidate personal qualities became more important for television dependent voters during the 1960s, and in each post-1964 election were less important for voters who relied on newspapers than for those who relied on television. The differences did not appear to be a function of the higher level of education of newspaper readers.

The availability of over thirty years of carefully collected survey data has made possible the study of change in how voters choose among presidential candidates. An important finding of studies utilizing these data is the increased importance of candidate personal qualities (see, among others, Popkin et al., 1976; and Kirkpatrick et al., 1975). Coincident with this change has been the birth and development of television, now the most widely used medium of political information. This paper examines the role of television in the increased candidate-orientedness of the public, and offers empirical support for the proposition that television has facilitated and encouraged vote choices based upon the personal qualities of candidates.

Television's potential for affecting the criteria of choice in elections was noted from the start. Looking ahead to the first "TV election," Jack Gould, television critic for the *New York Times*, wrote in the summer of 1952 that

SCOTT KEETER is Director of the Commonwealth Poll in the Survey Research Laboratory, and Assistant Professor of Political Science at Virginia Commonwealth University. The data were made available by the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, which bears no responsibility for the analysis and interpretation presented here. The author wishes to thank John Brigham, William Gormley, Gerald Pomper, and this journal's anonymous reviewers who commented upon earlier drafts.

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> . . . a TV-aware electorate is not going to be voting for a man merely on the basis of his reputation, or his thoughts as recorded in the printed word, or his disembodied voice as it comes out of a loudspeaker. Television makes the candidate of today a human being at one's elbow, who is going to be judged on the same terms as a man greets any new acquaintance. (Gould 1972:21)

Since then, television's image-making power is thought to have been influential in most elections, particularly in the Nixon–Kennedy debates, in Nixon's return to politics in 1968, and in Carter's campaign of trust and honesty in 1976.

And yet the search for clear evidence of television's impact has been mostly futile. As Joseph Wagner's (1983) review of research indicates, except for event-specific or group-specific phenomena, the quantitative literature has for the most part confirmed the "minimal effects" thesis. Beyond this, content analyses of television and newspapers suggest that the two media present very similar images of candidates (Hofstetter, 1976; Meadow, 1973; Evarts and Stempel, 1974; Patterson, 1980). Voters' perceptions of the personal qualities of candidates do not appear to vary with the particular mix of their information sources (Patterson and McClure, 1976; Miller and Jackson, 1973).

However, while voters may hold similar images of candidates regardless of how they obtain political information, the importance of candidate images—relative to other information—may be greater for voters who depend upon television. Despite similarities with other media, television by its nature provides a qualitatively different product. It provides the candidate as a person. This is a function of the visual and *actual* nature of television's content, and is reinforced by practices of its news organizations and personnel that serve to downplay cognitive content. Doris Graber's analysis of campaign news on television and newspapers supports this view:

> The skimpiness of television issue coverage, particularly the dearth of quotes by candidates, meant that people who relied primarily on television for campaign information learned little about the candidates' stands on issues and even less about the candidates' priorities. This left the television viewer with information weighted heavily in favor of using characteristics of the man, rather than issue positions, as voting criteria. (Graber, 1976:300–301).

Wagner (1983:415–426) provided evidence that the television's slighting of issues leaves the television-dependent voter less able to discriminate between candidates on the basis of issues (see also Clarke and Fredin, 1978). Thus, voters choose as best they can. Television makes information about candidates personal qualities cheaper to obtain than information about issues. And regardless of its accuracy, such information obtained through television seems more credible. As Benjamin Page put it, "perceptions of personality are no longer limited to hearsay" (Page, 1978:264).

This paper will examine changes in the electoral importance of candidate personal qualities since the advent of television, and assess the role played by television in those changes. While the general topic is the rise of candidate-orientedness, the specific focus is upon the importance of voters' perceptions of candidates' personal characteristics that could be created or shaped through vicarious "encounters" with candidates on television. The central research question is whether the type of medium a voter depends upon for campaign information is related to the importance of candidates' personal qualities in the voter's choice. Of course, most Americans are exposed to televised political information. Campaign spot advertising and upbeat news have seen to that. Consequently, ascertaining television's effects is difficult. But voters' dependence upon television varies sufficiently to permit a comparison using survey data.

Method

The data are from eight presidential election studies conducted by the Center for Political Studies (CPS) at The University of Michigan. These data have been the staple of most voting behavior research in the United States. Voters' chief source of information was determined by items that asked respondents to identify the medium they "got the most (campaign) information from" (1952–1968) or "rely on most for news about political and current events" (1976 and 1980). This question was not asked in 1972 or 1984, but because some respondents in the 1972 study were included in a three-wave panel (1972–1974–1976), their responses to a comparable question in 1974 can be used to divide the 1972 sample.[1]

The criteria used by citizens to evaluate the candidates were determined using the series of open-ended questions that asked respondents

[1] The wording for the item in the studies from 1952 to 1968 was: "Of all the ways of following the campaign, which one would you say you got the most information from—newspapers, radio, television, or magazines?" After 1956, radio and magazines combined accounted for less than 10 percent of the choices of respondents. In 1974 and 1976, the wording was: "Which do you rely on most for news about politics and current events—newspapers or television?" In 1980, the question read "In general, which do you rely on most for news about politics and current events, television, newspapers, magazines, or radio?" The marginals for 1976 were: 65% "television," 19%, "newspapers," and 17% "both" (volunteered). For all years, only those respondents who said "newspapers" or "television" were included in the analysis. Other researchers who have compared television viewers and newspaper readers include Clarke and Fredin (1978), Robinson (1976), and Wagner (1983).

"Is there anything in particular about [candidate] that might make you want to vote for [against] him?" These questions were asked early in the interview, prior to other substantive questions about the candidates that might contaminate the answers by suggesting criteria of evaluation. Respondents were prompted for up to five discrete answers (three in 1972) to each of the four questions. Typically, over 80% of voters had something to say about each candidate. These responses provide an excellent measure of the particular candidate attributes salient to citizens. Scholars using these data ordinarily group the responses according to common themes, corresponding to theoretical "criteria" underlying voter decision-making. For convenience, the CPS performs this grouping in its codebooks, employing such categories as "candidate leadership qualities," "personal qualities," and "party connections" (see Stokes, 1966; Miller and Miller, 1976; and Glass, 1985, for examples of this method).

The present study employed four categories, two of which pertained to candidate characteristics. One of these was "executive capacity and experience," including mentions of the candidates' activities and associations in politics. Among such references were: "He was a good governor," "comes from a good family," "a military man," or "He's a patriot." The second category of references to the candidates was "personal qualities and traits," including, for example, "good smile," "humble," "a good speaker," "honest," "sincere," "trustworthy," "good sense of humor," "smart," or the opposites of these. While television may promote a comprehensive candidate-orientedness in voters, the separate categories for experience and personal qualities facilitate a more narrow focus on the specific hypothesis that seeing the candidates on television encourages vote choices based on personal traits.

The third category of voter response included references to issues, ideology, or groups in society likely to be helped or hurt by the candidate. A fourth category was necessitated by the rather large number of unspecific responses. Frequently given evaluations such as "He's a good man" or "I don't like his policies" (and being unwilling or unable to name specific policies) indicate affection or disaffection, but are so devoid of substance as to preclude a sound judgment about the nature of the criteria used by the voter. To avoid discarding information while not confounding the other categories, these responses were assigned to a category called "vague."

The pertinence of different kinds of comments about candidates was ascertained using a multivariate candidate choice model, which included variables for the four components described above, plus party identification, attitudes toward the parties, age, education, and income. Multiple regression analysis permits the estimation of the importance of each variable—including the four criteria: policies, personal qualities and traits, executive capacity and experience, and "vague"—to the vote.

The construction of the four candidate criterion variables was straightforward. Each respondent said what was liked and disliked about each candidate. These responses were sorted into the four categories. Within each category, the extent to which a particular candidate is advantaged or disadvantaged was determined by subtracting the number of unfavorable remarks from the number of favorable remarks for each candidate, and then taking the difference of those two values. This net score in each category then becomes one indicator of how the respondent may vote. Multiple regression analysis, using a linear probability model and ordinary least squares, allows us to see the extent to which the respondents' net score in each category is associated with the vote—in other words, the "weight" of each component.[2] For example, if one candidate receives many more favorable mentions on issues than does his opponent, his advantage in the issue category will be large. But despite this, if the voters are more concerned with, say, that candidate's perceived lack of moral fiber, and they vote against him on that basis, then his favorable issue score will be relatively uncorrelated with the vote, and the weight of issues will be low. The voters liked his stand on issues, but they voted on other grounds.

A test of the hypothesis that television promotes candidate-orientedness can be made by separating respondents by media use and comparing the relative importance of references to candidate characteristics for those who depend upon television and those who depend on newspapers.

[2] Similar models have frequently been used in research on voting behavior, despite generally recognized difficulties. A chief objection to regression is the use of a dichotomous dependent variable (the vote). Kagay and Caldeira performed analyses similar to mine for the elections from 1952 to 1972, using both regression and probit analysis. The results with the two methods were virtually identical (Kagay and Caldeira, 1975:12, appendix). For a dissenting view, see Aldrich and Cnudde (1975).

The exact equation for each election is as follows: VOTE (dichotomous; Democrat = 1, Republican = 0) = EDUCATION (as coded by the CPS; for the most studies it was years of formal education) + AGE (in years) + INCOME (as recorded by the CPS but recoded to produce a ratio scale) + PARTY IDENTIFICATION (Democrat, independent, Republican) + NET SCORE OF RESPONSES ABOUT CANDIDATE PERSONAL QUALITIES AND TRAITS + NET SCORE OF RESPONSES ABOUT CANDIDATE EXECUTIVE CAPACITY AND EXPERIENCE + NET SCORE OF RESPONSES ABOUT CANDIDATE POLICIES + NET SCORE OF VAGUE RESPONSES. The net score terms were computed as follows: [(# of favorable responses about Democratic candidate) − (# of unfavorable responses about Democratic candidate)] − [(# of favorable responses about Republican candidate) − (# of unfavorable responses about Republican candidate)].

Wallace and Anderson voters were excluded from the analysis in 1968 and 1980, respectively.

Results

Table 1 shows the results of the analysis for the four criteria based upon the open-ended questions, plus party identification (the demographic variables and attitudes about the parties have been omitted from this presentation). The table includes the unstandardized regression coefficients (*b*'s), standard errors, and sample sizes for each media use group. For ease of comprehension, the trends for executive capacity and experience, personal qualities and traits, and party identification are plotted in Figures 1, 2, and 3 respectively.

In Figure 1 (executive capacity and experience) we see no clear pattern. This criterion was particularly important in 1956 and 1976. In three of the four most recent elections, the *b*'s were larger for the television group than for the newspaper group.

For the category of personal qualities and traits (Figure 2), the expected pattern appears. Candidate personal qualities and traits have been more important for the television group than for the newspaper group in every election since 1964.[3] In the first two elections—1952 and 1956—the weights for personal qualities were relatively low for the television group (*b* averaged under .02). In 1960, the weight doubled to .034. In 1964 and 1968, the weight rose to .05, then to .09 in 1972, .07 in 1976, and back to about .05 in 1980. The weights for personal qualities for the newspaper group also rose from 1956 to 1960, but since that time—with the exception of 1972—they have remained at a relatively low level, smaller than those seen for the television group.

Could the differences in the importance of candidate personal qualities be a spurious consequence of the different kinds of people attracted to television and newspapers? Perhaps cognitive political sophistication is related both to media use and to the criteria used for voting. Sophisticated citizens might be less likely to use candidate personal qualities as a basis for choice, and also to use newspapers for information. If we may take education as a surrogate for cognitive political sophistication, a test for spuriousness is possible.

However, as David Glass's (1985) analysis demonstrated, level of education is not systematically related to the weight of candidate personal qualities. Citizens with lower levels of formal education are not more likely than those with higher levels to choose candidates on the basis of candidate personal qualities. Controlling for education does not eliminate the differences in the weight of candidate personal qualities between television viewers and newspaper readers. Table 2 shows the results of this analysis for 1976, including both media use and

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[3] The statistical significance of differences between the media-use groups was computed using the formula $(b_1 - b_2) / (\sigma_1^2 + \sigma_2^2)^{1/2} = z$. The differences for 1968 ($p < .03$) and 1976 ($p < .002$) were significant beyond the .05 level in a one-tail test.

Table 1. Weights for Components of the Candidate Choice Model, 1952 to 1980, by Respondents' Chief Source of Information

	1952	1956	1960	1964	1968	1972	1976	1980
Executive Capacity								
Newspaper readers								
slope	.040	.085	.052	.051	.042	.025	.057	.071
standard error	.015	.016	.018	.022	.020	.036	.013	.020
Television viewers								
slope	.007	.050	.082	.043	.063	.047	.085	.063
standard error	.012	.013	.015	.016	.014	.036	.010	.015
Personal Qualities								
Newspaper readers								
slope	.019	.018	.048	.040	.020	.079	.035	.038
standard error	.016	.013	.009	.011	.013	.025	.010	.019
Television viewers								
slope	.016	.016	.034	.049	.050	.087	.074	.045
standard error	.011	.010	.007	.008	.009	.028	.008	.012
Issues, Groups								
Newspaper readers								
slope	.054	.057	.078	.055	.051	.067	.050	.057
standard error	.021	.017	.011	.011	.014	.016	.012	.013
Television viewers								
slope	.057	.039	.052	.033	.044	.085	.051	.074
standard error	.016	.012	.009	.007	.011	.018	.008	.009
Vague References								
Newspaper readers								
slope	.080	.043	.068	.109	.078	.042	.074	.061
standard error	.026	.024	.016	.018	.019	.037	.020	.024
Television viewers								
slope	.055	.071	.076	.095	.057	.105	.062	.072
standard error	.021	.016	.011	.012	.012	.039	.012	.016
Party Identification								
Newspaper readers								
slope	.131	.171	.219	136	.240	.214	.228	.204
standard error	.027	.026	.020	.024	.032	.025	.025	.028
Television viewers								
slope	.186	.216	.239	.144	.164	.169	.175	.193
standard error	.021	.021	.011	.017	.021	.026	.015	.020
Number of Cases								
Newspaper readers	251	300	333	275	186	254	327	171
Television viewers	402	591	851	577	440	283	894	470

SOURCE: National Election Studies of the Center for Political Studies, The University of Michigan.

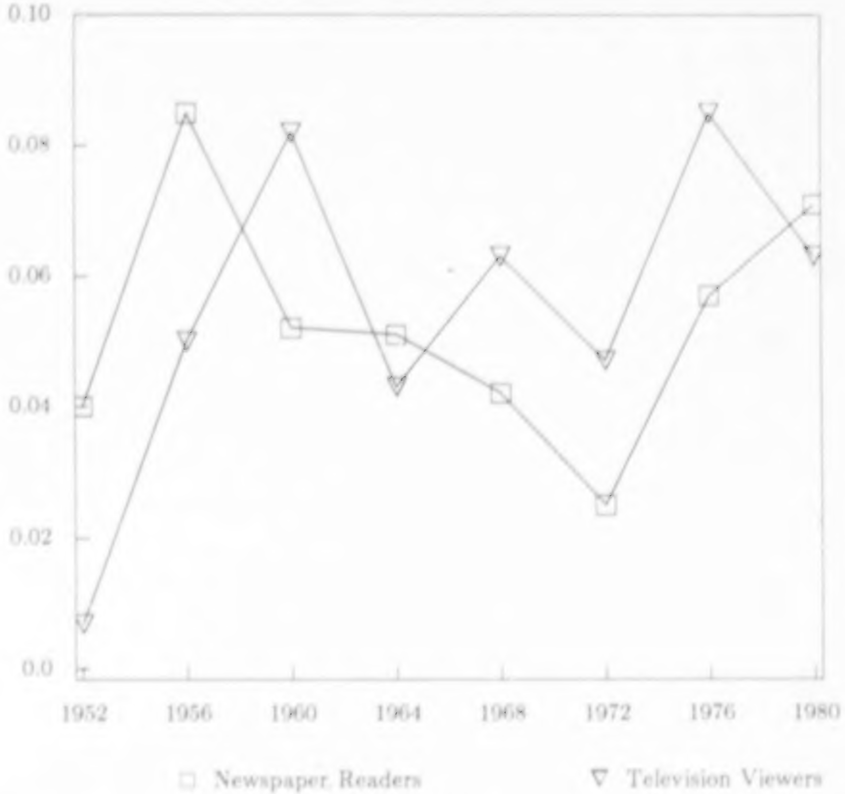

Figure 1. Weight of Executive Capacity

education. The small number of cases in some groups urges caution, but the results actually underscore the apparent media effect, since candidate personal qualities were most important for *college-educated* television viewers.

It should be noted that while the weight of personal qualities has increased since the 1950s, the incidence of these comments has changed little over the period. Two measures of this—the percentage of all respondents that made at least one mention of candidate personal qualities, and the proportion of all mentions that fell into this category—show no trend over time. This suggests that the *salience* of such attributes relative to others has changed little. People have long thought about and discussed the candidates as people. However, the *pertinence* of such attributes to the vote clearly increased, at least through 1976, for those voters dependent upon television for their political information.

The pattern of increase in the weight of candidate personal qualities for the television-dependent group—in particular the rise from the 1950s to 1964—comports well with contemporary analyses of the his-

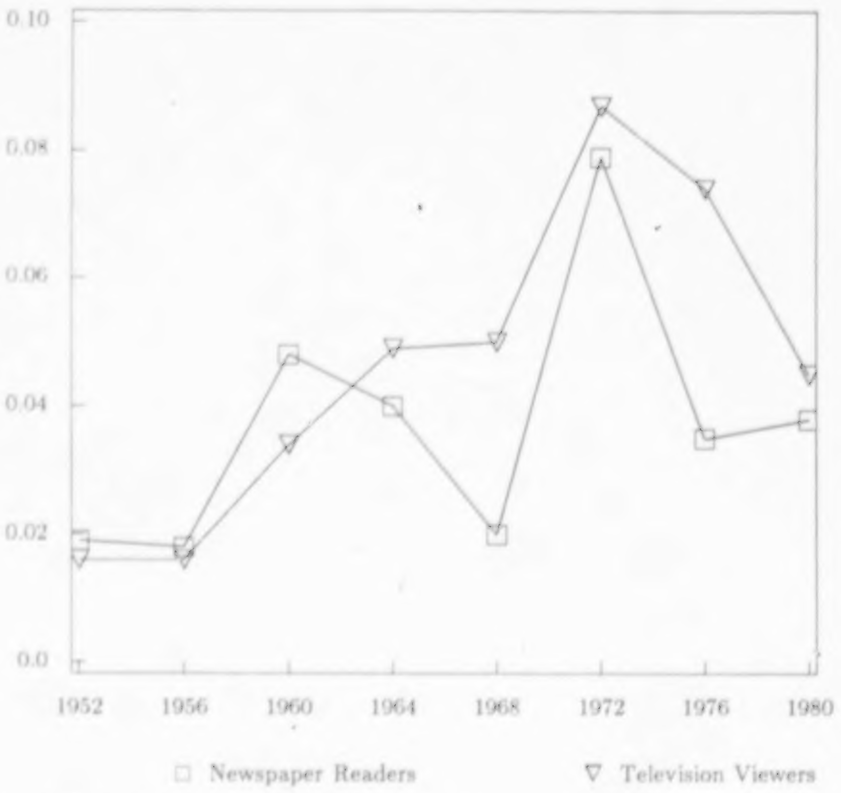

Figure 2. Weight of Personal Qualities

Table 2. The Importance of Candidate Personal Qualities and Traits, by Education and Media Use, 1976

	Less than High School Diploma	High School Diploma	At Least Some College
Newspaper readers			
slope	.027	.035	.033
standard error	.079	.026	.011
N cases	37	107	184
Television viewers			
slope	.067	.055	.085
standard error	.019	.015	.013
N cases	251	328	316

SOURCE: 1976 National Election Study, Center for Political Studies, The University of Michigan.

tory of political television. Among others, Robinson (1977:25–26) has argued that both the audience and the content of political television changed markedly in the early 1960s. Political programming in the 1950s was sparse, relatively dull, and sufficiently lengthy for easy avoidance (exceptions to this pattern existed, of course: Eisenhower made use of spot advertising as early as 1952, Edward R. Murrow's "See It Now" was popular, and the debates between Richard Nixon and John F. Kennedy commanded large audiences). The modernization of the medium, as manifested in longer, more provocative newscasts and extensive use of short campaign ads, occurred in the early 1960s. At the same time, programming developments and the declining cost of television receivers combined to change the social composition of the audience for political television during this period. Although television's penetration into American homes was rapid, the correlation between social status and the viewing of programs about the presidential campaign remained fairly high through the 1960 election. In 1964, that association had vanished.[4]

The increase in candidate-orientedness for the television group was not accompanied by a decrease in the weight of other substantive criteria. As the data in Table 1 indicate, the overall weight of policy and vague mentions has not changed very much, although sharp oscillations in both are seen.

Was any factor, then, *less* important for the television group? One answer to this question is found in the data for the weight of party identification (see Figure 3). They provide support for Philip Converse's "modified floating voter hypothesis" (Converse, 1962). Converse argued that uninformed citizens would vote their party identification unless moved by short-term information, which, given their low level of attention to politics, was unlikely to reach them. Well-informed citizens were also likely to vote according to party, since they tended to be more committed to a particular party for programmatic reasons. Party identification was thus a good predictor because citizens most likely to veer from it were least likely to be nudged by new information. As plausible as this hypothesis is, little evidence has been found to support it (Dreyer, 1971; Zukin, 1977; Joslyn 1977; Bybee et al., 1981).

Yet the development of television as a true *mass* medium for political information in the early 1960s greatly increased the likelihood that citizens with relatively little interest in politics would be exposed to short-term campaign information. The pattern in Figure 3 fits well with this interpretation. In the three elections prior to 1964, party

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[4] Gamma between family income and the viewing of programs about the campaign followed this pattern: 1952, .46; 1956, .48; 1960, .36; 1964, .03.

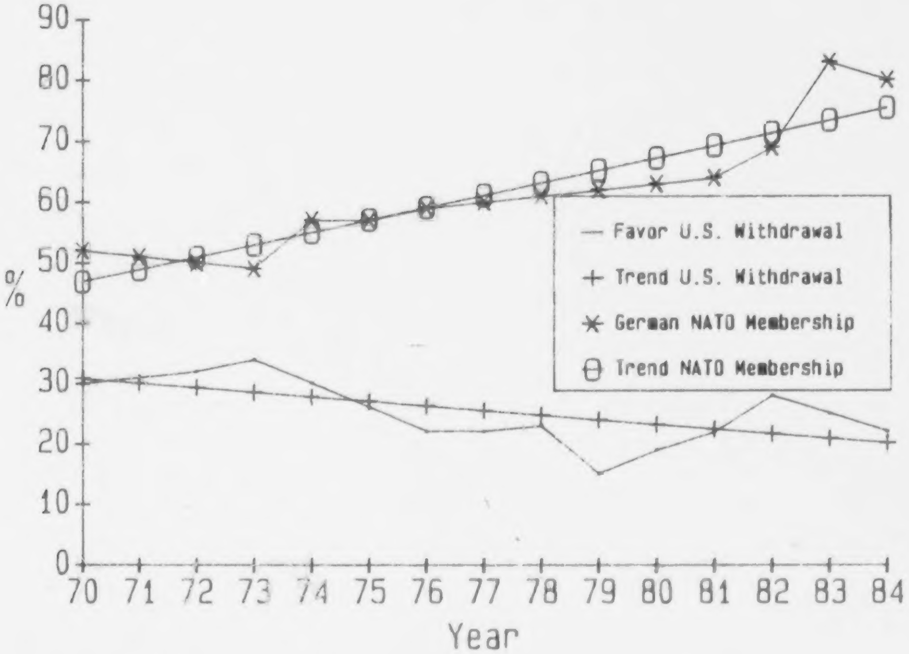

Figure 3. Attitudes on American Troops and German NATO Membership, 1970–1984.

Favor U.S. Withdrawal: Percentage replying "welcome" in response to the question "If you would read in the newspapers tomorrow that the Americans withdraw their troops from Europe, would you welcome or regret that?" *Source:* Rattinger and Heinlein, 1986: table 12; data from IfD.

German NATO Membership: Percentage in favor of the Western alliance in response to the question "In your opinion, what would be the better policy, should we continue our firm military alliance with the Americans, or should we attempt to be neutral, like Switzerland, e.g.?" *Source:* Rattinger and Heinlein, 1986: table 17; data from EMNID, IfD, SINUS.

hypothesis talks about the dramatic break away from prior attitude patterns as being concentrated among younger cohorts.

However, even such a crude analysis indicates that there might be some problems with this hypothesis if applied to the public at large. Over the fifteen years that the data in Figures 1 through 4 describe, considerable generational replacement had to take place, but the trends in the time series simply do not show that the opinions commonly ascribed to the new generations have become more frequent. On the contrary, these trends point instead in the opposite direction, even though these generations' share of the samples has become bigger each year. If one tries to save the argument by claiming that the new attitude patterns have lain dormant, in spite of generational replacement, until polarized debates set in after the NATO decision of 1979, there still is little evidence, because this would have to manifest itself in clear-cut shifts in aggregate public opinion in the early 1980s. Such

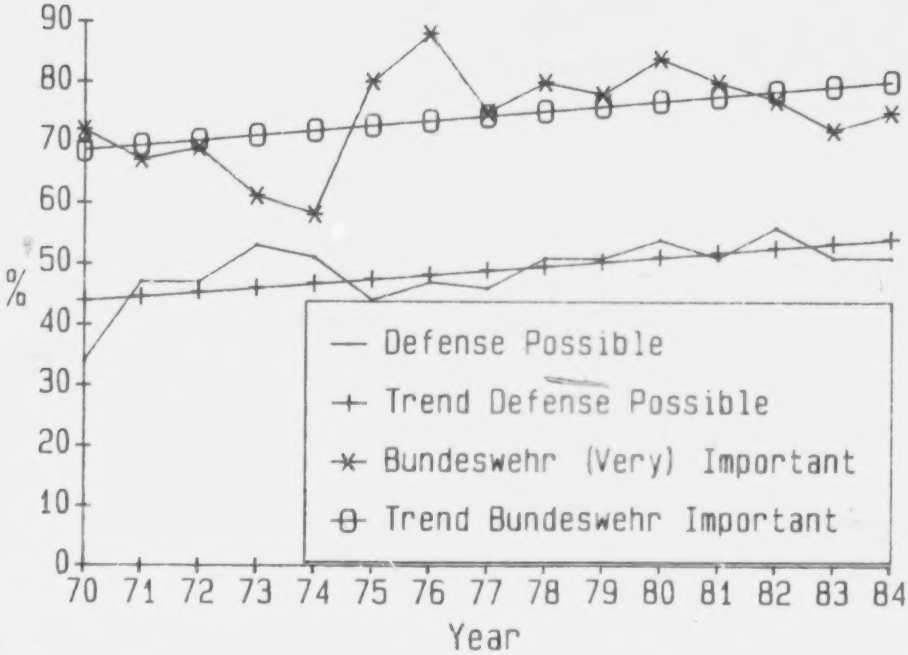

Figure 4. Attitudes on the Possibility of Defense and the Importance of Armed Forces, 1970–1984.

Defense Possible: Percentage replying "strong enough" in response to the question "Assuming that the Russians and the National People's Army of the GDR would attack us, do you believe that NATO, including the Bundeswehr [i.e., the FRG's army], would be strong enough to protect us effectively, or do you think that the Russians would overwhelm us?" *Source:* Rattinger and Heinlein, 1986: table 23; data from EMNID, IfD, SOWI.

Bundeswehr (very) Important: Percentage replying "important" or "very important" to the question "In our times and with the current situation of the world, do you believe that the Bundeswehr is very important, important, not that important, unimportant, superfluous, or dangerous?" *Source:* Rattinger and Heinlein, 1986: table 30; data from SOWI, Federal Ministry of Defense.

shifts, however, cannot be discerned. With this initial doubt in mind, let us now have a closer look at whether age really was the crucial dividing line along which national security attitudes in the Federal Republic have lined up in the past couple of years.

Generational Replacement or Partisan Polarization?

Table 1 represents the polarization of 16 different defense policy attitude items from summer 1981 to summer 1983 according to age and partisan preference of the respondents. Since these items came from many different surveys and the data were taken from published material, the delineation of age cohorts was not the same in all cases. For all

Table 1. Polarization of National Security Attitudes by Age and Party Preference

Question (Month/Year)	Extreme Percentage in Any Age Group			Percentage among Party Voters		
	30 and Below	40 and Above	Difference	Green Party	CDU/CSU	Difference
1. There is a military threat to FRG (5/83)	44	47	3	46	77	31
2. FRG should accept the neutron bomb (8/81)	26	31	5	10	42	32
3. Agreement with INF deployment in respondent's area (6/83)	18	23	5	3	35	32
4. Opposition against INF in FRG (2/83)	59	51	8	73	40	33
5. FRG should accept U.S. leadership (5/82)	26	35	9	21	39	18
6. Détente should be continued (3/82)	71	61	10	84	52	32
7. FRG should leave NATO under no circumstances (3/82)	74	84	10	58	87	29
8. NATO is necessary for FRG (5/83)	82	93	11	56	96	40
9. FRG–U.S. relations are "good" (8/82)	49	62	13	44	61	17
10. Agree with production of neutron bomb (8/81)	29	42	13	13	54	41
11. If Geneva talks fail, continue talks and do not deploy INF (7/83)	86	72	14	96	62	34
12. Peace in Europe has become less secure in previous year (5/83)	57	72	15	73	27	46
13. Warsaw Pact is militarily superior (5/83)	35	52	17	24	52	28
14. Nuclear weapons are unacceptable for Christians (4/83)	65	38	27	85	33	52
15. Would participate in protest demonstrations in case of INF deployment (8/83)	27	0	27	49	2	47
16. Peace movement is necessary for FRG (5/83)	69	35	34	93	35	58
Mean			14			36

SOURCES: All questions except nos. 6, 7, and 15 were asked by Forschungsgruppe Wahlen (FGW), and published in its "Politbarometer" reports. Questions 6 and 7 come from CONTEST-CENSUS in Frankfurt, and no. 15 was asked by EMNID. Complete question wordings, response distributions, and breakdowns by age, sex, etc., can be found in these institutes' reports, or in Rattinger and Heinlein, 1986: tables 107–122.

items, therefore, the two age cohorts below 30 years and above 40 years that were widest apart in their responses were identified (first and second columns of Table 1). The difference in their opinions (third column of Table 1) is the maximum polarization between any two age groups, and the rows of Table 1 have been ordered with increasing magnitude of this difference. The maximum distances of opinion according to partisan preference without exception occurred between those who intended to vote for the CDU/CSU, and for the Green party, respectively, so columns four through six of Table 1 describe attitudes of these two partisan groups and their polarization.

The "successor generation" in the early 1980s clearly differed from older West Germans in its opinions on national security. On all sixteen items the extreme value for younger people shows them to be more antimilitary, anti-U.S., and anti-NATO. However, most of these differences are far from being dramatic, especially if one considers the way they were computed, i.e., searching for the *maximum* polarization between any younger and any older cohort. Moreover, only for four items (9, 13, 14, 16) is the majority reversed, and only for two of these items (14 and 16) is this reversal very strong: While about two-thirds of the respondents in the extreme cohort below 30 years held nuclear weapons to be basically unacceptable for Christians, and the peace movement to be necessary for the Federal Republic, only slightly above one-third of those in the extreme cohort over 40 years shared these views. With an average difference of 14 percentage points, the polarization according to age really does not support the notion of a radical break of the views of the "successor generation" from those of older Germans, even on such issues as the neutron bomb (ERW), NATO membership, or INF deployment. It is undoubtedly true that most antimilitary and anti-U.S. activists of the early 1980s have been younger people, but the reverse, that the young tend to be antimilitary and anti-U.S. activists, simply is not supported by the available data.

As can be seen in Table 1, public opinion on each item tended to be polarized much more strongly along partisan lines. With an average difference of 36 percentage points between sympathizers of the Green party and of the CDU/CSU, the former conform much more closely to the notions often advanced about the "successor generation" as a whole. Polarization along both criteria is least dissimilar for perceptions of the military balance, and for opinions on U.S.–West German relations (items 13, 5, and 9), and it is much more pronounced along partisan than along generational divides for all items relating to INF deployment, ERWs, détente, and threat perception. For eight items there is a reversal of majority between adherents of the Green party and of the CDU/CSU. In four cases this reversal is only moderate (items 1, 9, 10, 13), but for the other four items (4, 12, 14, 16) comparatively small minorities within one group correspond to outspoken majorities within the other group, and vice versa. However, even in spite of this rather significant extent of partisan polarization, majorities of both groups agree on such issues as support of German membership in NATO, skepticism about American leadership, the necessity to continue détente, and on preferring further disarmament talks over INF deployment.

The question now, of course, is what this all means in terms of the "successor generation" hypothesis. First, it is obvious that the wholesale departure from previous attitude patterns regarding national security issues is *not* characteristic of youth as a whole, but mostly of those younger people who sympathize with the Green party. In the 1987 Bundestag elections the Green vote in the 18–24 (25–34) age bracket was 15.5% (17.4%), so even equating the Green electorate with the better-educated segments of the younger cohorts would be a gross exaggeration. And even the Green electorate itself with its strong bias toward youth is quite far from being a monolithically antimilitary, anti-NATO, anti-U.S. bloc, as Table 1 shows. Younger people *outside* the Green electorate show little resemblance with the "successor generation" stereotype.

Second, the fact that the covariation of national security opinions is so much stronger with party preference than with age forces us to rethink the problem of causality. Between partisan preferences and attitudes on specific political issues a variety of causal patterns is conceivable. At the one extreme you have those who intend to vote for a particular party because it is closest to them on the issues that they judge most salient. At the other extreme are those who like a particular party best for a variety of other reasons and for the sake of consistency accept this party's positions in areas that are less salient for them. Regarding different political problems one and the same individual can easily fall into both groups. In the Federal Republic there is, of course, another political issue area that heavily, if not primarily, mobilizes Green support, namely, environmental problems. The fact that even the comparatively strongly mobilized Green electorate is far from monolithic in its defense policy opinions demonstrates that it is possible for Green voters to disagree with "their" party in this issue area. It is therefore equally possible that some of those who toe the party line in these opinions do not do so because these are the attitudes that tie them to this party, but simply because they support its proclaimed stand in most ongoing political debates, even if they do not center around the issues that have constituted the initial allegiance.

Such an interpretation of elite–mass interactions is much broader than the "successor generation" hypothesis, indeed comprises it as a special case. It is possible that societal conflict and elite political debates are brought about by the polarization of mass attitudes due to generational replacement, but it is equally possible that polarization at the mass level in part *results* from polarization of elite conflict over particular issues. In the short run, both processes might look very similar at the aggregate level, but they should differ considerably in terms of long-run consequences. Generational replacement is a slow historical process that cannot be halted and can be only slowly counteracted by life cycle effects. Polarization along party lines both at the elite and at the mass level, on the other hand, can come about quite quickly, with the issues of the day, relevant issue publics, and dividing lines more or less in flux.

From the data presented so far it seems safe to conclude that the "successor generation" hypothesis can hardly be proclaimed as the clear-cut winner. This becomes even more obvious if one considers the changes of defense policy attitudes that could be observed in the early 1980s for adherents of even the two major established parties of the Federal Republic, the CDU/CSU and the SPD, changes that to a considerable degree occurred irrespective of age. For reasons of space it is impossible here to trace at any length how the SPD's electorate followed the party's withdrawal from support of NATO's 1979 decision; it happened gradually at first and then quite rapidly after the overthrow of the Schmidt government in late 1982. Only a small but impressive example of the direct impact of partisan attitudes on national security opinions will be presented.

From 1981 through 1984 "Forschungsgruppe Wahlen" in Mannheim regularly polled whether peace in Europe was evaluated as having become more or less secure over the past year. In the total population, perceptions of peace as having become less secure fell between 1981 and 1984 from 67% to 27% (1982, 57%; 1983, 37%), while perceptions of no change or greater stability of peace increased from 33% to 73%. Whether this trend signals either the dissolution of earlier alarmist notions or evaluations that things were already so bad they couldn't get worse is irrelevant here. All we are concerned with is the breakdown of this trend according to party preference for the CDU/CSU or all other parties combined, presented in Figure 5.

In 1982 CDU/CSU voters were exactly like the rest; in 1981 they had been somewhat more pessimistic. In 1983, however, their pessimism regarding the stability of peace dropped by more than 30 percentage points and then paralleled the general downward trend, but at a much lower level. On the whole, within these three years pessimism among CDU/CSU voters fell by almost 60 percentage points, among all others by less than 30. The reason for this phenomenal short-term development clearly is the change in government. With "their" party in power, most Christian Democratic voters simply accepted the new govern-

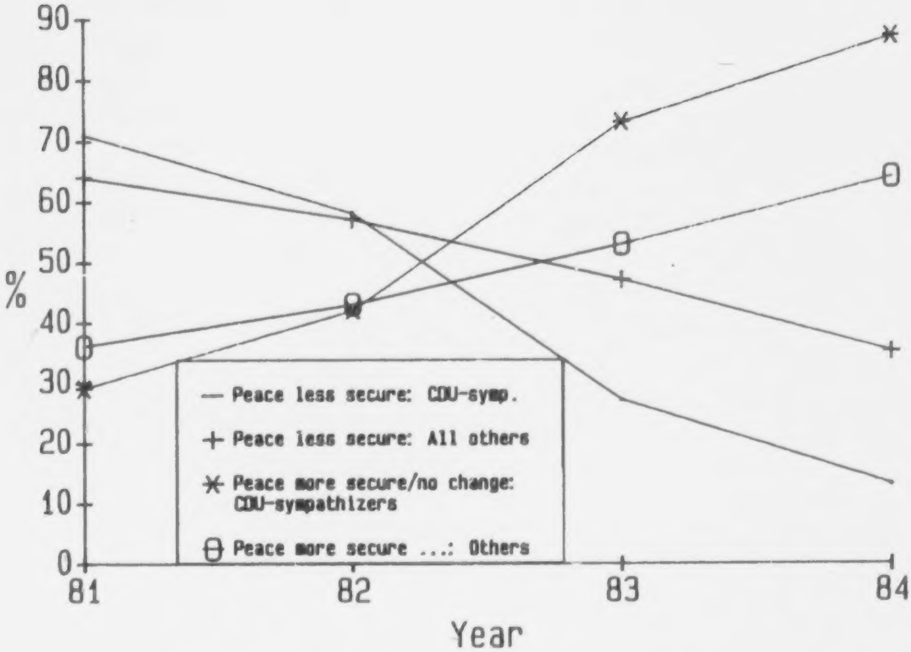

Figure 5. Attitudes on the Stability of Peace by Partisanship, 1981–1984

ment's position that there was no reason to worry about the stability of peace in Europe, even with Western INF deployment imminent. Neither the strong aggregate short-term downward trend of pessimism (that was evident even among Green voters whose pessimism fell from 82% to 63% between 1981 and 1984) nor its clear-cut differentiation along partisan lines can be made to square with generational explanations. Instead, we see that even "cognitions" of factual conditions in the "real world" of security policy can change quickly and dramatically according to partisan attitudes.

Attitudes, Nonattitudes, and Information on National Security

Up to here it has (implicitly) been assumed that people who are being polled for their opinions on defense policy actually do have such attitudes, and that these attitudes can be adequately measured. As long as one only wants to follow trends of response distributions over time or to compare them between subsamples, as has been done so far, this assumption does not pose much of a problem—at least as long as one is willing to additionally assume that those without attitudes believe the same and that distortions of measurement are the same all the time and within all subsamples. However, when it comes to what polling is all about for most of its consumers, i.e., to say what public attitudes really look like and how they are distributed, things are far more complicated. In this final section this problem will be approached in three steps: First, we will have a closer look at the range of survey results that were obtained on the double-track decision and its implementation in the Federal Republic. Assuming that the variations that can be observed might have something to do with the knowledge people have about these things, some data on levels of relevant information will then be presented. Third, and finally, we will briefly report some methodological experiments to test the impact of question formats and wordings on national security opinions.

The major survey research institutes in the Federal Republic did not conduct such experiments of their own in the early 1980s. They were too busy trying to find out what people *really* thought about the NATO decision and INF deployment. In doing so a whole variety of questions on this subject were asked, sometimes almost exactly at the same time, and a variety of contradictory findings were reported—and greedily absorbed into the political debates. In that way, however, a large-scale experiment was conducted involuntarily.

Table 2 contains results from eight different questions on the double-track decision and INF deployment that were asked between only one to eight different times between January 1981 and October 1983 by various institutes. For all these questions except one, a high proportion of refusals (between one-fourth and one-third) to choose from the closed-ended responses is visible. This exception is whether INF should be deployed after the scheduled date if no success were to emerge from the Geneva talks, a question that also produced the largest antideployment majority. Opposition still greatly outnumbers favorable responses for the next two questions, but with the invocation of Soviet SS-20s targeted on Western Europe in the fourth question the gap begins to close. Questions 3 and 5 are particularly interesting because they form the only genuine split-half experimental design. The third question was put to a subsample in October 1981 without explaining the number of SS-20 warheads targeted on Western Europe and the fact that there were no comparable weapons in the West. Not surprisingly, there is a reversal of the majority between the two question formats; given this prior information in question 5 more respondents favored deployment than opposed it. In spite of this experiment, the version *containing* this information was continued and the other was not.

Even though there is no reference to *new* nuclear weapons in question 6, at that time it had to become interpreted in terms of imminent

Table 2. Attitudes on INF Deployment and the Double-Track Decision, 1981–1983

Question	No. of Surveys	Dates of Surveys	Attitudes on INF and NATO's Double-Track Decision		Percent Don't Know, Undecided
			Percent Favorable	Percent Opposed	
1	6	5–9/83	24(25)	72(75)	4
2	4	5/81–1/82	28(38)	45(62)	27
3	1	10/81	28(39)	44(61)	28
4	2	8–10/83	34(44)	43(56)	23
5	4	1/81–4/82	38(52)	35(48)	27
6	5	7/81–4/82	40(61)	26(39)	34
7	1	8/83	46(68)	22(32)	32
8	8	5/81–8/83	51(70)	22(30)	27
Mean			37(49)	39(51)	24

Note: Numbers in parentheses are percentages without "don't know" or "undecided."

Questions: 1. If the Geneva talks fail to yield an agreement until fall, what should be done? Deploy INF (with or without continuing negotiations) vs. continue talks without deployment. (FGW, Institut für angewandte Sozialwissenschaft in Bad Godesberg [INFAS]; Rattinger and Heinlein, 1986: tables 81–83)

2. NATO plans to deploy American INF in Europe, and in the FRG, to balance Soviet INF. Do you welcome this or not? (IfD; Rattinger and Heinlein, 1986: table 49)

3. Do you favor deployment of new nuclear missiles, that can reach the Soviet Union, in the FRG or not? (United States International Communications Agency [USICA]; Rattinger and Heinlein, 1986: table 52)

4. If the Geneva talks fail to yield an agreement until fall and the Soviet Union keeps its SS 20 missiles targeted on Western Europe, should new American INF be deployed in the FRG according to the double-track decision or not? (IfD; Rattinger and Heinlein, 1986: table 84)

5. Question as in 3, with previous information: As you might know, the Russians have about 450 nuclear warheads on new missiles, the SS 20s, targeted on Western Europe, whereas NATO does not have such missiles that are targeted on the Soviet Union. In view of this fact, . . . ? (USICA; Rattinger and Heinlein, 1986: table 51)

6. Do you believe that nuclear weapons in Europe help prevent a Soviet attack, or do you think that they make a Soviet attack more likely? (USICA; Rattinger and Heinlein, 1986: table 56)

7. Assuming we can only choose between leaving NATO or deploying the new American missiles in the FRG, what should we do? (IfD; Rattinger and Heinlein, 1986: table 85)

8. In the double-track decision NATO nations have agreed to balance Soviet INF by deploying similar missiles in Central Europe while initiating negotiations with the Soviet Union on the reduction of armaments. Do you think that this double-track decision is good or not good? (IfD; Rattinger and Heinlein, 1986: table 47)

INF deployment. Precisely because there is no such reference, favorable responses exceed opposition, but there is a great deal of insecurity. Question 7 shows how people can be pushed into favoring INF, even though new deployment in the Federal Republic is explicitly mentioned, by posing withdrawal from NATO as the alternative. Question 8, finally, by focusing on the NATO decision and mentioning its intention to negotiate arms reductions, produces the highest share of favorable responses. Thus, in the early 1980s a wide range of results of surveys on this topic was available to choose from. Depending on one's predilections one could claim either that only one-fourth or that more than half of the West German population agreed with the December 1979 decision and its implications. If, as is often done, don't knows and undecided respondents are excluded, one could describe about 70% as either in favor or opposed, depending on the survey results utilized.

Logically this does not make sense, of course. However, as soon as one allows the possibility that many respondents reply to such questions without these matters being of much personal salience and without a great deal of relevant information or experience, these seeming inconsistencies are not at all surprising. As the problem of personal salience of national security issues has been dealt with at great length elsewhere (Rattinger, 1985; Rattinger and Heinlein, 1986), it should suffice here to simply recall the low importance ascribed to the preservation of peace as a political problem for the Federal Republic (Fig. 1), or to consider the high proportion of undecided respondents in Table 2. If low personal salience and low information are combined, we come into segments of opinion where so-called nonattitudes (Converse, 1970) increasingly play a role. Under such conditions survey responses are still made (if only to please the interviewer), but they are not a reliable and valid measure of the attitude to be assessed, because such an attitude barely exists. Instead, responses will be influenced by a multitude of other factors, like contextual information, question wording, and affects vis-à-vis the actors that are being referred to, etc. Within this realm of nonattitudes, many "logically" incompatible responses make perfect sense, even for one and the same individual. This "logic" of choosing whatever "feels best" in a given situation presupposes, of course, that there is little knowledge of the relevant facts and of strategic intricacies. Let us, therefore, now briefly turn to the question of how much people know about these things.

As Table 3 shows, the range of statements on people's information on the double-track decision and related matters that could be supported by data is even wider than for opinions on these things themselves. However, it does not take too close a look to discover that actually those questions that show large proportions of respondents as

Table 3. Information About INF, the Double-Track Decision, and the Geneva Talks, 1981–1983

Question	No. of Surveys	Dates of Surveys	Percent Informed, Correct Answer	Percent Not Informed, Wrong Answer	Percent Don't Know, No Answer
1	1	12/81	86(86)	14(14)	0
2	1	2/83	83(83)	17(17)	0
3	3	5/81–8/83	75(77)	22(23)	3
4	1	8/83	67(67)	33(33)	0
Mean "soft" items (1–4)			77(78)	22(22)	1
5	1	2/82	55(83)	11(17)	34
6	1	2/83	27(49)	28(51)	45
7	1	9/83	20(20)	78(80)	2
8	1	3/81	15(25)	46(75)	39
9	2	5–7/81	10(18)	46(82)	44
Mean "hard" items (5–9)			23(35)	43(65)	34
Mean all items			50(60)	33(40)	17

NOTE: Numbers in parentheses are percentages without "don't know" or "no answer."

QUESTIONS: 1. In Geneva, Americans and Russians have recently started negotiations on disarmament. Have you heard about this or not? (IfD; Rattinger and Heinlein, 1986: table 39)

2. In the context of the Geneva disarmament negotiations, you increasingly hear about the so-called zero option. This means . . . [explanation]. Have you heard about the zero option? (IfD; Rattinger and Heinlein, 1986: table 41)

3. In December 1979 NATO has agreed upon the so-called double-track decision, in order to . . . [explanation]. Have you heard or read about this decision? (EMNID, INFAS; Rattinger and Heinlein, 1986: tables 32–33)

4. In the FRG American Pershing I missiles have been deployed now for an extended period of time. Did you know this? (IfD; Rattinger and Heinlein, 1986: table 43)

5. Do you know whether or not the U.S. and the Soviet Union currently negotiate about limitations of INF in Europe? (USICA; Rattinger and Heinlein, 1986: table 40)

6. Do you happen to know who proposed the zero option, the Germans, the Americans, or the Russians? (IfD; Rattinger and Heinlein, 1986: table 42)

7. Assuming new INF will be stationed according to the double-track decision: Will this increase or decrease the number of nuclear warheads in the FRG, or will it remain the same? (EMNID; Rattinger and Heinlein, 1986: table 44)

8. If you hear or read the word "NATO-Nachrüstung" [i.e., INF deployment according to the double-track decision], can you tell me what this means? (IfD, open-ended; Rattinger and Heinlein, 1986: table 35)

9. In your opinion, what is NATO's double-track decision about? (INFAS, open-ended; Rattinger and Heinlein, 1986: table 34)

correctly informed have to be classified as very "soft." In items 1 through 4 the existence of the Geneva talks, the zero option, the double-track decision, and the presence of Pershing I missiles in the Federal Republic were mentioned and even partially explained. Only then were people asked whether they had previously been aware of all of this. With a question format like this the only surprising thing is that the percentages claiming to have been aware are not even higher. One-third of respondents admitting to not having known about the Pershing I missiles is an admirable degree of honesty, but most likely still falls considerably short of the actual amount of ignorance.

As one proceeds to the "hard" knowledge items (those that do not supply what they ask for) refusals soar to one-third of samples and well above. Question 5 is not yet completely "hard," as the way it is asked suggests that there *are* such negotiations. Moreover, had each of the respondents who have not admitted ignorance simply flipped an honest coin, 33% of the total sample still would have given a correct answer. Similarly, for questions 6 and 7, regarding who proposed the zero option and on the number of nuclear warheads in the Federal Republic after deployment of new INF, the percentages of correct responses have to be set against the proportions that would be obtained by random guessing. For question 6, with three alternatives provided, this percentage would be 18, so there is a surplus of only 9 percentage points of the total sample being correctly informed over random expectation; for question 5 this surplus is 22 percentage points.

Question 7 is fascinating. Because it proceeds from the assumption of new INF deployment, respondents are very confident that they can reply (only two percent "don't know"), and they overwhelmingly state that the number of warheads would go up, an answer that is indeed suggested to the nonexpert by the question. However, the double-track decision actually called for more old warheads to be withdrawn than new ones deployed, so *"decrease"* would have been the correct answer. Not surprisingly, this was chosen by virtually no one. If one therefore also classifies "remain the same" (meaning no increase) as correct, as has been done in Table 3, one sees that an honest coin would have led to "correct" responses for an additional 29% of the total sample. The actual level of information falls considerably short of random expectation, so it is fair to say that very few people really *knew* what would happen to the number of nuclear warheads in the Federal Republic.

The open-ended questions 8 and 9 show that correcting for random responses in the previous questions *does* bring us closer to an adequate assessment of the level of information in the population at large. With 40% or more "don't knows," only 15% and 10% of total samples in 1981 could adequately characterize the meaning of "Nachrüstung" and the contents of the double-track decision, respectively.[3] With such a low level of knowledge we can safely conclude that a considerable number of nonattitudes will certainly be obtained when questions like the ones in Table 2 are asked on these matters.

In order to get a better understanding of the effects that variations of survey instruments can have under such conditions of low personal salience of, and low information on, the subject matter to be surveyed, a series of experiments with a small sample of local students were performed in summer of 1985[4] (see Schuman and Presser, 1981, for the logic and many results of such studies). As we briefly report some results from this study, it should be understood that, if anything, we are going to *underestimate* the impact of different question formats, because students generally are better informed about defense policy than the rest of the population and ascribe greater personal importance to this policy arena. The experiments on which we will report here fall into three classes. First, we investigate the effects of omitting or explicitly offering "don't know" alternatives or neutral "middle" responses. Second, the effects of minor variations of question wording are assessed. Third, we will have a look at the impact of reversing question order.

Explicitly offering "don't know" or "middle" response categories or not is a purely formal device on which different survey research institutes have very different philosophies. Table 4 demonstrates that such responses are seldom volunteered but are quite popular when they are permitted, and that the amount of uncertainty among respondents varies considerably between items. However, that can only be detected if such answers are explicitly allowed. Only then does it become visible, for example, that uncertainty about Soviet trustwor-

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[3] The distinction between "correct" and "wrong" was made by the author on the basis of the grouped responses reported by the survey institutes. The criteria for being "correct" were rather mild ones: For question no. 8, all responses referring to new or modern weapons for NATO were regarded as correct (even without reference to *nuclear* weapons, or to *missiles* to be stationed in *Europe*); for question no. 9 all responses referring to *simultaneous* negotiations and preparations for deployment of new weapons were classified as correct.

[4] In June 1985 90 students of the University of Bamberg were interviewed for their attitudes on nuclear weapons and national security with a standardized questionnaire (32 items) within a split-half design. Interviews lasted about 25 minutes, on the average. All of approximately 120 students from one particular dorm (housing students from all schools of the university) were to be interviewed within two days; 30 of them could not be contacted or refused to participate. Interviewers were students from a class on national security policy and its social context the author taught in summer 1985 (in the U.S. system it would have been called a graduate course). Randomization of forms was achieved by tossing coins; 47 respondents were thus interviewed with the standard questionnaire, 43 with the experimental questionnaire (in Tables 4–7 these are referred to as versions A and B, respectively). Concerning the relative positions of one pair of questions in the interview a split-four design was used (see note to Table 6). I thank all students who were involved for their interest and their contribution.

Table 4. Split-Half Experiments on Students' National Security Attitudes with Explicit "Don't Know" and "Middle" Categories

Question	Form	Percent "Liberal" Response	Percent Middle Response	Percent "Conservative" Response	Percent Don't Know
1. Acceptance of nuclear deterrence	A	90	—	5	5
	B	85	—	5	10
2. Should FRG become neutral	A	60	—	35	5
	B	40	—	42	18**
3. Freedom or peace more important	A	58	—	35	7
	B	54	—	28	18*
4. Can Soviets be trusted to honor treaties	A	55	—	38	7
	B	33	—	34	33***
Mean questions 1–4	A	66	—	28	6
	B	53	—	27	20
5. Accept member of Green party as defense minister	A	60	7	23	10
	B	50	15	30	5
6. More or less military expenditures for FRG	A	85	12	3	0
	B	63	28**	7	2
7. Possibility of military defense of FRG	A	30	0	63	7
	B	20	42***	38	0
8. Acceptance of U.S. troops in town	A	55	25	20	0
	B	38	55***	7	0
Mean questions 5–8	A	58	11	27	4
	B	43	35	21	1

NOTES: *Questionnaire form A:* "Don't know" (questions 1–4) or "middle" category (questions 5–8) *not* offered ($N = 47$). *Questionnaire form B:* "Don't know" or "middle" category offered ($N = 43$). Significance measures are based on a one-tailed Z-test for difference of proportions of "don't know" or "middle" responses.

QUESTIONS: 1. Can you accept the notion that the national security of the Federal Republic is based upon a concept of nuclear deterrence, or can't you accept this notion (or don't you have an opinion)?

2. What kind of foreign policy should the Federal Republic pursue: Should we continue our military alliance with the Americans, or should we try to be neutral, like Switzerland, e.g. (or don't you have an opinion)?

3. Nobody knows what is going to happen, but what do you think: If some day we might be faced with the choice to surrender Europe to the Soviets or to defend ourselves with all the means we have, what would be more important, to defend democratic freedom, even if this means war, or to prevent war, even if this means living under a communist government (or don't you know)?

4. Do you think that the Soviet Union can be trusted to honor the treaties it has concluded with the Federal Republic and with the Western powers, or don't you think it can be trusted (or don't you have an opinion)?

5. Could you accept a member of the Green party as defense minister, (would you care about this at all,) or couldn't you accept that?

6. Do you think that in the future the Federal Government should spend more, (the current amount,) or less on military defense?

7. Assuming the Federal Republic would be attacked by the East, do you think NATO could defend against such an attack, (do you think successful defense would be uncertain,) or do you believe that defense would not be possible?

8. Do you like the idea that U.S. troops are stationed here in town, (do you care about this at all,) or don't you like it?

*$p < .1$. **$p < .05$. ***$p < .01$.

thiness is much stronger than about the desirability of West German neutrality, or that indifference is the most frequent reaction to U.S. troops in town.

In the second group of experiments it was attempted to push respondents in the experimental group even further into the antimilitary and anti-U.S. camp (already quite popular with students, of course) by small modifications of question wording. Table 5 shows considerable success in this regard. Reminding people of conditions in the GDR and of a possible risk that assisting West Germany and Berlin might pose to the United States were least effective in reducing enthusiasm about a military person as defense minister or trust in U.S. security guarantees, respectively. The tiny word "even" (*sogar*), tied to the use of nuclear weapons for military defense of the Federal Republic, made quite a difference in terms of support for this course of action. Defining the same time period for comparison of judgments on the quality of West German–American relations either by the number of years or by reference to the tenure of President Reagan in office dramatically reversed majority judgment between the two groups. In these experiments we also see that variations of questions wording can either increase or decrease respondents' insecurity. Questions 2 and 4 are examples of the former, 1 and 3 of the latter. The Reagan question in particular illustrates what "nonattitudes" on foreign and defense policy mean, even with a student sample: How can the average person make a judgment of changes in relations between the United States and the Federal Republic? As soon as a clue is offered that evokes well-defined affective connotations (like the U.S. president does for many students), such judgments are made more readily and in line with the clue.

The experiments finally to be described on question order effects go far beyond what generally is done in analyzing survey data. If a defense policy item is not completely isolated in an interview, the rest dealing with other subjects, it is conceivable that responses to former questions shape later answers as much as nuances of question design do. This is not necessarily an indication of nonattitudes but can also reflect different interpretations of question meaning due to context. The two questions in Table 6 obviously evoke some kind of reciprocity norm and therefore are expected to be particularly subject to such transfer effects, and indeed, they are clearly visible. In the aggregate, in the student sample 10% more replied that the Soviet Union should withdraw INF from the GDR to further détente than said the same thing for American INF in the Federal Republic. However, for both superpowers there was more agreement with this demand when this question followed second, and, as expected, this transfer effect was strongest when the two items immediately followed each other. In the USSR-

Table 5. Split-Half Experiments on Students' National Security Attitudes with Variations of Question Wording

Question	Form	Pro-U.S., Promilitary	Anti-U.S., Antimilitary	Don't Know
1. Soldier as defense minister	A	18	75	7
	B	7	90**	3
2. Defense with nuclear weapons	A	25	75	0
	B	2	88*	10
3. Quality of U.S.–FRG relations	A	48	37	15
	B	30	65***	5
4. Trust in U.S. assistance	A	75	15	10
	B	61	26*	13
Mean (B version minus A version)		–17	17	0

Questions: 1A. Should the FRG's defense minister be a soldier?

1B. In the GDR the defense minister normally is a soldier. Should the FRG's . . . ?

2A. Do you favor military defense of the FRG, if nuclear weapons have to be used for that purpose?

2B. Do you favor military defense of the FRG, *even* (*"sogar"*) if . . . ?

3A. Have U.S.–FRG relations improved or deteriorated over the past five years?

3B. Have U.S.–FRG relations improved or deteriorated since President Reagan came into office?

4A. Do you believe that the U.S. would assist the FRG and West Berlin in crisis situations?

4B. Do you believe . . . , or don't you believe that the U.S. would take that risk?

$^{*}p < .1$. $^{**}p < .05$. $^{***}p < .01$.

U.S. sequence 70% (Soviet withdrawal) and 80% (U.S. withdrawal) agreement were obtained, respectively; in the reverse order these percentages are 90% (Soviet withdrawal) and 60% (U.S. withdrawal). Substantively, and politically, these are very different messages: 10% more for United States than for Soviet Union withdrawal in one case, 30% less in the other. We know, however, that this difference is simply the product of a small modification in method.

In Table 7 we do not have two "symmetrical" questions, but rather questions reflecting two different cognitive representations of the Federal Republic's security environment. We see that, in the aggregate, there was no transfer from perceptions of the military balance to judgments on whether the Federal Republic could be subjected to political pressure by the Soviet Union due to its military potential. When the order is reversed, however, such effects are obvious, response insecurity and perceptions of Eastern superiority declining strongly after people have made their judgment on the possibility of political blackmail. It is interesting to note that these effects are minimal for the one-third

Table 6. Split-Half Experiment with Variations of Question Order: Students' Attitudes on INF Withdrawal

Question	Agreement (Form) Asked First	Agreement (Form) Asked Second	Transfer Effect (Second minus First)
Questions Separated by Eight Other Items ($N = 45$)			
Soviet Union should withdraw INF from GDR	74 (A)	90 (B)	16*
U.S. should withdraw INF from FRG	74 (B)	72 (A)	−2
Questions Immediately Following Each Other ($N = 45$)			
Soviet Union should withdraw INF from GDR	70 (A)	90 (B)	20**
U.S. should withdraw INF from FRG	60 (B)	80 (A)	20*
Total ($N = 90$)			
Soviet Union should withdraw INF from GDR	72 (A)	90 (B)	18**
U.S. should withdraw INF from FRG	67 (B)	76 (A)	9

QUESTIONS: In order to get détente in Europe going again, it is necessary that the Soviet Union (U.S.) starts to withdraw its theater nuclear weapons [i.e., INF] from the GDR (FRG). Do you agree or not?

In the standard questionnaire A the USSR question was asked first; in the experimental questionnaire B the U.S. question was asked first. For these two questions there were two versions of each questionnaire with different distances between these two questions. Form A was used for 24 respondents with these two questions immediately following each other, and for 23 respondents with eight items separating them; for form B these numbers were 21 and 22, respectively.

*$p < .1$. **$p < .05$.

of students that see the Federal Republic subject to Soviet pressure, whereas among the other two-thirds, who first reject such a possibility, there is then a quite massive need to bring the second answer in line with the first one, resulting in a substantial drop of "don't knows" and "perceptions" of Warsaw Pact superiority. If even students, with their comparatively good knowledge of defense policy and with above average personal salience of these matters, can react so strongly to the context of questions in their responses to basic perceptual items, it is not hard to imagine that what is published as survey results on national

Table 7. Split-Half Experiment with Variations of Question Order: Students' Attitudes on the Military Balance and Its Political Importance

Question	Response	Asked First	Asked Second	Transfer Effect (Second minus First)
		Total (*N* = 90)		
Can FRG be blackmailed by Soviet Union	Yes	37	36	-1
	No	63	64	1
		(*N* = 43)	(*N* = 47)	
Who is stronger in military power	Warsaw Pact	35	20	-15*
	NATO	23	35	12
	Both equal	17	33	16**
	Don't know	25	12	-13*
		(*N* = 47)	(*N* = 43)	
		FRG *Can* Be Blackmailed (*N* = 33)		
Who is stronger in military power	Warsaw Pact	21	26	5
	NATO	24	20	-4
	Both equal	30	27	-3
	Don't know	25	27	2
		(*N* = 16)	(*N* = 17)	
		FRG *Cannot* Be Blackmailed (*N* = 57)		
Who is stronger in military power	Warsaw Pact	44	16	-28**
	NATO	22	44	22**
	Both equal	9	37	28***
	Don't know	25	3	-22***
		(*N* = 27)	(*N* = 30)	

QUESTIONS: In your opinion, can the Soviet Union use its military potential for political blackmail of the FRG?

Considering the military balance between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, who is stronger?

In the standard questionnaire A the question on the military balance was asked first; in the experimental questionnaire B the question on the possibility of blackmail was asked first.

$^{*}p < .1$. $^{**}p < .05$. $^{***}p < .01$.

security public opinion at large frequently will have come about through similar, and possibly even stronger, processes and distortions. But all we usually get to know is response distributions; most of the time their background remains obscure.

Conclusion

The thrust of this article is largely nihilistic. We have shown that assertions about public opinion on defense policy in the Federal Republic having been transformed radically since the December 1979 NATO decision and thus having become a key factor requiring major policy changes in order to regain societal consensus are grossly overstated. We have also shown that normal partisan strife is at least as important as the notion of generational succession for explaining the polarization of mass opinions that has occurred. Finally, we have argued that, in spite of the importance public opinion surveys were ascribed in the political battles of the first half of this decade, there is little evidence of a rapid increase of relevant knowledge in the population at large and little certainty as to what its positions on the implementation of the double-track decision really looked like. Instead, a large amount of volatility of public opinion on these matters due to the pervasiveness of nonattitudes has to be acknowledged, even for the alleged core of "new realities" in the social context of defense policy, i.e., the young and better educated. The public's views in the Federal Republic on national security and nuclear weapons since 1979 have been important and interesting, and they deserve further study, but the joyful or alarmist diagnosis of a sudden "revolt of the masses," led by an emergent "successor generation," falls short of the complex realities that still need to be understood more adequately.

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THE POLLS—A REPORT
AIDS

ELEANOR SINGER
THERESA F. ROGERS AND
MARY CORCORAN

In 1981, a new, mysterious, and deadly disease known as AIDS was identified. At present there is no cure for it and no vaccine to prevent its transmission. Efforts to control the spread of AIDS are hampered by the long latency between infection and symptoms (an average of at least four years) and by the fact that once an individual is exposed to the virus presumed to cause AIDS, he or she can infect others without knowing it. The disease has been termed a pandemic; by 1986, 1.5 to 2 million people in the United States were believed to have been exposed to it.

To the best of our knowledge, the first survey of public opinion about AIDS was carried out in June 1983. Between then and November 1986, the cutoff date for this article, we identified 22 surveys on this topic. Four were carried out in 1983, nine in 1985, and another nine in 1986. Almost all have been nationwide, and they represent more than 200 questions that the public has answered about AIDS—what they know about the disease, how vulnerable they think they are, what they think the government should do, and what, if anything, they are doing to protect themselves. These data provide the best gauge we have of the public's knowledge about and reaction to AIDS and how their concerns and views may be changing.

In selecting questions for this article, our main criterion was the availability of trend data. In some cases, however, we have reported responses to items for which there are as yet no trends, because we believe they are likely to be asked again in the future.

We have organized this summary of the poll results in terms of six dimensions: awareness of the disease, concern about it both as a seri-

ELEANOR SINGER is a Senior Research Scholar at the Center for the Social Sciences, THERESA ROGERS is a Senior Research Scholar at the Graduate School of Business, and MARY CORCORAN is a graduate student in the Department of Sociology, Columbia University. The authors are grateful for the assistance of the Gannett Center for Media Studies at Columbia University, where the first author was a resident senior fellow during the preparation of this article.

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ous medical problem in general and as a problem for one's own health, perceptions about the likelihood of its spread, beliefs about methods of transmission, attitudes toward measures for protecting the public, and reported changes in one's own behavior to avoid exposure.

Between June 1983 and August 1986, the percentage of the population who said that they had heard or read about AIDS increased from 77% to 99%. There are now virtually no differences among demographic categories in the percentage of those aware of AIDS. During the same period of time, the percentage who personally knew someone with AIDS increased only from 3% to 6%, though in cities with a high concentration of AIDS cases, the percentage was much higher. In New York City, for example, it was 16% in September 1985.

Media coverage appears to have obliterated the "awareness gap" between population subgroups, but other gaps in knowledge still exist. For example, those with the least amount of education are least likely to be well informed about methods of transmission. And those with less accurate knowledge about how AIDS can be transmitted are much more likely to express concern that they or someone they know will get AIDS, to say that they or someone they know avoids places frequented by homosexuals, and to favor government regulations, including quarantine for people with AIDS.

At the same time, those who are realistically at greater risk are also most likely to express concern about AIDS. Young people—those under thirty, single people, those living in urban areas in which a high number of cases has been identified, and blacks all express greater than average concern about contracting AIDS. They are also more likely to say they have changed their behavior, including sexual behavior, in order to avoid exposure to AIDS. Because of the lack of space, we have not shown these demographic breaks, but they are consistent across all surveys for which we have seen the data.

So far as the spread of AIDS is concerned, the data summarized below indicate no trend of increasing concern about AIDS as a problem for one's own health. But some (though not all) questions indicate increasing concern about the spread of AIDS beyond present at-risk groups to the general population.

The data on beliefs about transmission indicate widespread accuracy at the extremes, with some confusion about intermediate modes. For example, virtually everyone knows that AIDS can be transmitted by sexual contact, both homosexual and heterosexual, and by blood transfusions. At the other extreme, virtually no one believes that it can be contracted by being in the same room as someone who has AIDS. But with respect to kissing, sharing a drinking glass, and eating food prepared by someone who has AIDS, public opinion is divided. Substantial minorities express the belief that AIDS can be transmitted in these ways even though public health experts insist that it cannot. And as of late 1986 there did not appear to have been any increase in accuracy over time.

The evidence is mixed with regard to attitudes toward regulation. On some matters, such as fighting to have a child with AIDS removed from school, the percentage saying they would fight has decreased over time. On other matters, such as taking school employees with AIDS off the job, the percentage saying employees should be removed has increased. And on still other matters, such as favoring quarantine for those infected with AIDS, there appears to have been no change in aggregate opinion over time.

There is a slight increase in the number of those reporting that they are changing their behavior as a result of AIDS. Gallup, for example, finds a small but steady increase in the percentage saying that they or people they know avoid homosexuals, stay away from places where homosexuals may be present, and refuse elective surgery that would require blood transfusions. (Another behavioral indicator, not reflected in these opinion data, is the increasing recommendation of some doctors that patients donate their own blood prior to surgery.)

The data also provide evidence that the public credits the media as being an important source of information about AIDS. In response to questions by the *Los Angeles Times* (December 1985), 25% of the public said that they had been "paying most attention recently" to stories about AIDS in the media, and this figure was higher than that for any of the other seven topics they were asked about, including hijackings and the budget deficit. In fact, 72% reported hearing about or reading three or more stories about AIDS "in the last seven days." In the last half of 1985, a time when eight of the surveys whose findings are summarized here were conducted, the evening newscasts of the major networks were carrying an average of almost twenty stories per month on AIDS.[1]

One cannot, of course, say that the public's answers to poll questions mirror what the media have reported. The public remembers some things and not others, and they add to and subtract from what they have heard or read. At the same time, different media build up some stories and downplay or ignore others. Despite all of this selectivity and distortion, the poll data reveal that the general population is aware of AIDS and has some basic knowledge about how the disease spreads. In addition, those realistically at greater risk are the ones most likely to say that they are concerned about contracting the disease. There is variation from survey to survey in question wording and in the number and type of response categories, but, on balance, we see more agreement than disagreement across surveys in the public's answers.

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[1] As compiled from *Television and Abstracts: A Guide to the Videotape Collection of the Network Evening News Programs* in the Vanderbilt Television Archives. There was some variation among the three networks, but not a great deal.

Because information and education are the only means now available to control the spread of AIDS, the poll results are of interest to the public health community. From this standpoint, they provide good information about the public's awareness and level of knowledge. But the data are of limited utility in one important way: they are less informative than they might be about changes in behavior to avoid exposure to the AIDS virus. Only seven of the surveys asked specific questions about precautionary measures, if any, that the respondent was taking. The lack of such items and the paucity of trend data in this area are a weakness.

The poll results reported here were obtained from published and unpublished sources, the Roper Center, survey organizations, ABC, CBS, and NBC, *Newsweek*, and the *Los Angeles Times*. With the exception of two New York City surveys (ABC/DN 9/85 and Gallup 6/85), all surveys are based on nationwide samples. The sample sizes are at least 1,000 for all but the following six surveys:

Gallup	7/1983	$N = 767$
Gallup	8/1985	$N = 759$
Gallup	11/1986	$N = 756$
ABC/*New York Daily News*	9/1985	$N = 505$
CBS/*New York Times*	9/1985	$N = 762$
CBS	10/1986	$N = 823$

Responses totaling less than 0.5% have not been shown in the tabulations.

We wish to thank the organizations that shared unpublished data with us for this article. Further information about the surveys can be obtained from the appropriate organization.

ABC/DN—American Broadcasting Company/*New York Daily News*
ABC/WP—American Broadcasting Company/*Washington Post*
CBS—Columbia Broadcasting System
CBS/NYT—Columbia Broadcasting System/*New York Times*
Gallup—The Gallup Organization
Harris—Louis Harris and Associates
LAT—*Los Angeles Times*
NBC/WSJ—National Broadcasting Company/*Wall Street Journal*
Roper—The Roper Organization
YCS—Yankelovich, Clancy, and Shulman

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Contact: Direct and Indirect

Roper: Have you heard about the disease called AIDS that attacks a person's disease immunity system and is frequently fatal?

	8/83	*8/85*	*8/86*
Yes	91%	97%	99%
No	8	2	1
DK	1	1	1

Gallup: Have you heard or read about a disease called AIDS—acquired immune deficiency syndrome?

	6/83	*7/83*	*6/85*	*3/86*
Yes	77%	91%	95%	98%
No	23	9	5	2

ABC/WP, ABC/DN, CBS/NYT, LAT, CBS, Gallup: Do you personally know anyone who has AIDS?

	ABC/WP[a]	Gallup[b]	*ABC/WP*[c]	*ABC/DN*[c]	*CBS/NYT*	*LAT*[d]	*CBS*	*Gallup*
	6/83	*8/85*	*9/85*	*9/85*	*9/85*	*12/85*	*10/86*	*11/86*
Yes	3%	4%	6%	16%	2%	5%	5%	6%
No	97	96	94	84	98	94	94	94
DK/No op.	—	—	—	1	—	1	1	—

[a] Do you know anyone who suffers from AIDS?

[b] Do you personally know anyone who has contracted the disease called AIDS?

[c] Do you personally know anyone, either living or dead, who contracted AIDS?

[d] Do you personally know anyone who has tested positive for AIDS, or has contracted AIDS? By "know," I mean someone who you would speak with at least once a month on the phone or in person.

Concern About AIDS as a Serious Medical Problem and Problem for Own Health

CBS/NYT, CBS: Think about some serious diseases or medical problems facing the country today. Which two or three do you think are the most serious?*

	CBS/NYT	*CBS*
	9/85	*10/86*
Cancer	74%	75%
AIDS	51	55
Heart disease	41	38
Substance abuse	2	6
VD/Herpes	5	4
Diabetes	5	4

* Only the most frequently mentioned diseases are shown here. Multiple answers were allowed.

CBS/NYT, LAT, CBS: Now think about *your own* situation. Which two or three diseases or medical problems are *you* most concerned about getting?*

	*CBS/NYT*** *9/85*	*LAT**** *12/85*	*CBS*** *10/86*
Cancer	59%	56%	64%
Heart disease	31	11	31
AIDS	13	12	12
VD/herpes	—	—	—
Diabetes	5	3	6

* Only the most frequently mentioned diseases are shown here.

** Multiple answers were allowed.

*** Alternatives were enumerated for respondents; only one response was allowed.

LAT: 12/85: What do you think is the most important problem facing this country today: crime, or AIDS, or government spending, or inflation, or the moral decline of society, or unemployment, or the possibility of war, or what?

	Knowledge of AIDS		*Fear of AIDS*		
	High	*Low*	*High*	*Low*	*All**
Crime	14%	18%	17%	15%	26%
Education	11	9	9	10	16
AIDS	5	5	9	4	8
Budget	19	18	15	20	30
Inflation	8	8	10	9	14
Morals	10	10	7	11	17
Unemployment	13	14	16	12	23
War	14	10	12	12	20
Others	5	5	3	6	8
Not sure	1	3	1	1	2
Refused	0	0	1	0	0

* Up to two responses were recorded for each respondent. Subgroup percentages are for most important problem only.

Gallup: Are there any new public health problems which especially concern you?

	7/83	*8/85*
Yes	41%	44%
No	58	55
DK	1	1
If yes, which ones?*		
AIDS	24	32
Herpes	14	4
Pollution/toxic waste	1	2
Other	13	12
DK	1	1

* Alternatives not enumerated for respondents; more than one response allowed.

NBC: How concerned are you about AIDS as a problem to your own health? Would you say you are very concerned, somewhat concerned, or not at all concerned?

	11/85	*1/86**
Very concerned	27%	26%
Somewhat concerned	32	35
Not at all concerned	40	38
Not sure	1	1

* No difference by whether or not respondent has homosexual friends.

Concern About Spread

Gallup: Lately there has been some discussion in the news about the disease called AIDS. How worried are you that you or someone you know will get AIDS?

	8/85	*11/86*
Very	14%	19%
A little	27	25
Not very	27	25
Not at all	31	30
DK	1	1

ABC/WP, ABC/DN, CBS/NYT, Harris, CBS: Are you afraid that you might get AIDS?

	ABC/WP[a]	*ABC/DN*[a]	*CBS/NYT*	*Harris*[b]	*CBS*
	9/85	*9/85*	*9/85*	*11/85*	*10/86*
Yes	26%	42%	17%	10%	15%
No	73	57	79	87	83
DK/no opinion	1	1	4	3	2

[a] Are you afraid that you might pick up the AIDS virus yourself or aren't you afraid of that?

[b] Do you think that *you* run any risk of catching AIDS, or not?

CBS/NYT, NBC: So far, most of the people with AIDS have been homosexual men and intravenous drug users. Do you think AIDS will spread beyond those groups who already get it so that many people in the rest of the population will get AIDS, or don't you think so?

	CBS/NYT	*NBC*[a]
	9/85	*1/86*
Yes, will spread	61%	76%
No	20	15
Depends (vol.)	7	—
DK	12	9

[a] As of now, most of the people with AIDS in the U.S. are homosexual men and intravenous drug users. Do you think AIDS will spread beyond these groups so that other people in the country will get AIDS, or don't you think so?

ABC/WP, ABC/DN: So far three-quarters of AIDS victims have been homosexual males. The rest of the victims have mainly been drug addicts or recipients of blood transfusions. Do you think that AIDS is spreading so that it is now a threat to the general public in the U.S. or not?

	ABC/WP	*ABC/DN*
	9/85	*9/85*
Yes	79%	79%
No	18	17
DK	4	4

Gallup: At the moment, cases of AIDS are largely confined to homosexuals, hemophiliacs, other people receiving blood transfusions, and intravenous drug takers. How likely do you think it is that AIDS will eventually become an epidemic for the public at large?

	8/85	*11/86*[a]
Very likely	27%	36%
Somewhat	35	37
Not too likely	26	18
Not at all	7	5
DK	5	4

[a] How likely do you think it is that AIDS will eventually become an epidemic for the public at large?

ABC/WP: To the best of your knowledge, is the number of diagnosed cases of AIDS in the U.S. closer to a million or closer to 10,000?

	9/85
Closer to a million	29%
Closer to 10,000	63
DK/no opinion	8

LAT: From what you have heard and read, how many people in the United States have been exposed to the AIDS virus and will therefore test positive for the presence of AIDS antibodies? Just your best guess.

	12/85
To 2m	49%
To 26m	12
To 50m	4
To 74m	2
To 98m	1
To 122m	2
To 146m	1
To 170m	0
To 194m	0
To 218m	0
To 240m	1
Refused	28

Methods of Transmission

I'm going to read you a list. For each item, please tell me if you think that it is or is not a way for someone to catch AIDS from someone who has it. Can you catch AIDS from:

(The introduction and precise wording of the mode of transmission varies slightly from survey to survey.)

	Gallup 7/83	*ABC/ WP 9/85*	*ABC/ DN 9/85*	*CBS/ NYT 9/85*	*NBC 11/85*	*LAT 12/85*	*NBC 1/86*	*Gallup 4/86*	*CBS 10/86*	*Gallup 11/86*	
Casual contact											
Yes	25%							6%[a]		17%[b]	
No	59							81		78	
DK	16							13		5	
Intimate sexual contact (having sex)											
Yes		95%	95%	91%			63%*		93%	79%[c]	91%[d]
No		2	3	2			25		1	10	3
DK		4	2	7			12		6	11	6
Blood transfusion											
Yes		95%	97%	95%			55%*				
No		2	2	1			33				
DK		2	2	4			12				
Sharing (using) intravenous (hypodermic) needles											
Yes		92%	95%	91%							
No		3	3	2							
DK		5	3	7							
Kissing											
Yes		50%	56%	32%					29%		
No		36	28	42					51		
DK		14	16	26					20		
Using same drinking glass											
Yes		28%	38%	47%	33%		38%		36%		
No		55	45	34	44		45		43		
DK		16	17	19	23		17		21		
Being sneezed on											
Yes		22%	33%				32%				
No		62	50				53				
DK		16	17				15				
Sitting on a toilet seat											
Yes		16%	26%	28%		24%			23%		
No		69	60	49		63			57		
DK		15	14	23		13			20		
Shaking hands (being touched)											
Yes		7%	7%	11%							
No		85	86	73							
DK		9	7	16							
Working (being) in the same office (room) with someone who has AIDS											
Yes				12%	5%				6%		
No				70	84				81		
DK				18	11				13		
Donating blood											
Yes							33%				
No							63				
DK							4				
Food handling or preparation											
Yes					29%	19%	31%*				
No					47	65	55				
DK					24	16	14				

* Asked only of those who think it will spread. Percentages have been converted to total sample.

[a] Do you believe a person can get AIDS by being in a crowded place with someone who has it?

[b] Casual contact, such as sharing a water glass, shaking hands, or riding in the same elevator with a person who has AIDS.

[c] Heterosexual contact with a person whose blood has tested positive for AIDS.

[d] Heterosexual contact with a person who has an active case of AIDS.

ABC/WP, ABC/DN: Assuming there is no intimate physical contact, do you think it is safe or unsafe to associate with someone who has AIDS?

	ABC/WP	*ABC/DN*
	9/85	*9/85*
Yes, safe	57%	46%
No, unsafe	36	44
DK	7	10

Gallup: I am going to read you some statements about AIDS. For each, please tell me if you think the statement is probably true or if you think it is probably false? Think it is probably true that:

		(NYC)
	6/85	*6/85*
Some people can get AIDS when they receive blood transfusions	92%	90%
Drug users who share needles have a high risk of getting AIDS	84	86
Most people who have AIDS are homosexual men	80	73
Some wives and girlfriends of drug users have gotten AIDS	68	71
There is a great danger that AIDS will soon spread to all kinds of people in our country	66	69
You can get AIDS by being in a crowded place with someone who has it	9	15

LAT, CBS: There is a test to determine whether or not a person has the AIDS virus. As far as you know, does everyone with a positive test for the AIDS virus get AIDS, or not?

	LAT[a]	*CBS*
	12/85	*10/86*
Yes	28%	10%
No	29	54
DK/no opinion	42	36
Refused	1	—

[a] Medical researchers have discovered a virus that is closely linked with AIDS, called HTLV Three. Like all viruses, this one causes the body's immune system to manufacture antibodies which fight the virus. From what you have heard or read, is it your impression that a person who tests positive to these antibodies will probably get AIDS?

Gallup: Next I have some questions about screening tests for AIDS. As far as you know, when someone without any AIDS symptoms tests positive for AIDS virus antibodies in the blood, does this mean the person . . .

	11/86
Has been exposed to the virus, but is not necessarily infectious to others or likely to develop the disease?	37%
Is infectious to others and may develop the disease?	29
Is infectious to others and is certain to develop the disease?	11
DK	23

Protective Measures: Regulation of Others

WORK

NBC: Do you think employers should be able to fire someone who has been diagnosed as having AIDS, or not?

	11/85
Yes	19%
No	64
DK/not sure/no opinion	17

NBC: Do you think people who have been diagnosed as having AIDS should be allowed to continue to work as long as they are able to, or don't you think so?

	11/85
Yes	67%
No	18
DK/not sure/no opinion	15

CBS: Should there be a law restricting where people with the AIDS virus can work, even though public health officials don't think that would control the spread of AIDS?

	10/86
Yes	28%
No	59
DK/not sure/no opinion	13

SCHOOL

ABC/WP, ABC/DN, CBS/NYT, CBS: Do you favor or oppose allowing students with AIDS to attend school if health officials say there is no danger?

	ABC/WP	*ABC/DN*[a]	*CBS/NYT*[b]	*CBS*[b]
	9/85	*9/85*	*9/85*	*10/86*
Favor	62%	39%	40%	56%
Oppose	31	55	27	17
DK/no opinion	7	6	17	15
Depends (volunteered)	—	—	16	12

[a] Recently, New York City public school officials allowed a 7-year-old child with AIDS to attend class in Queens. Do you favor or oppose . . . ?

[b] Should children who have AIDS be allowed to go to school, or not?

ABC/WP, ABC/DN, Gallup: If you thought a child with AIDS might be in your children's school, would you keep your children home or would you send them to school?

	ABC/WP	*ABC/DN*[a]	*Gallup*[b]
	9/85	*9/85*	*3/86*
Keep home	26%	48%	24%
Send to school	68	46	67
DK/no opinion	6	6	9

[a] Many parents in Queens protested allowing the child with AIDS to attend school by keeping their own children home. If you thought a child with AIDS might be in your children's school, would you keep your children home or would you send them to school?

[b] A 14-year-old Indiana boy who contracted AIDS through a contaminated blood transfusion was banned from attending school classes. After a county medical officer ruled that he posed no health threat to his classmates, he went back to school, but the parents of almost half the students at his school kept their children home. If you had children of this age, would you permit them to attend classes with a child who had AIDS, or not?

Gallup: If you learned that a child with AIDS was attending the same school as a child of yours, would you:

	8/85	*11/86*
Fight to have the AIDS child removed from school?	17%	10%
Keep your child at home?	8	7
Instruct your child not to have contact with the AIDS child?	25	27
Not worry about children passing AIDS to one another?	30	44
Don't know	20	12

ABC/WP, ABC/DN: School officials should tell parents if a child with AIDS is attending their child's school. Do you agree or disagree?

	ABC/WP	*ABC/DN*
	9/85	*9/85*
Agree	78%	79%
Disagree	19	18
DK/no opinion	3	3

Public school employees found to have AIDS should be taken off the job.

Agree	47%	66%
Disagree	45	26
DK/no opinion	8	9

HOUSING

ABC/WP, ABC/DN: If it was proposed that an AIDS patient treatment and housing center be located in your neighborhood, would that upset you a great deal, only somewhat, very little, or not at all?

	ABC/WP	*ABC/DN*
	9/85	*9/85*
A great deal	17%	19%
Only somewhat	27	28
Very little	23	20
Not at all	30	31
DK/no opinion	1	2

QUARANTINE

ABC/WP, ABC/DN, LAT, NBC: People with AIDS should be put into quarantine in special places to keep them away from the general public.

	ABC/WP	*ABC/DN*	*LAT*[a]	*NBC*[b]
	9/85	*9/85*	*12/85*	*1/86*
Agree	28%	42%	51%	31%
Disagree	65	48	40	57
DK/no opinion	7	10	9	12

[a] Would you favor or oppose adding "AIDS" to the list of diseases that must be quarantined?

[b] Do you think that people who are known carriers of AIDS should be separated from the rest of the population, or don't you think so?

REGULATION OF SEXUAL ACTIVITIES

NBC: Do you think governmental restrictions should be placed on the sexual activities of people who are known carriers of AIDS, or don't you think so?

	11/85	*1/86*
Yes	58%	51%
No	31	41
DK/no opinion	11	8

YCS: There should be no laws, either federal or state, regulating sexual practices—that's up to the individual to decide for himself or herself.

	1977	*7/86*
Agree strongly	45%	44%
Agree partially	25	25
Disagree	26	27
Not sure	4	4

TESTING

NBC, CBS: Do you think the U.S military should test its personnel to see if they have been exposed to AIDS, or not?

	NBC	*CBS*[a]
	11/85	*10/86*
Yes	78%	72%
No	16	21
DK/no opinion	6	7

[a] Do you think that testing for the AIDS virus should be required for people beginning military service, or don't you think so?

NBC: Do you think employers should test their employees to see if they have been exposed to the AIDS virus, or not?

	11/85
Yes	39%*
No	45
DK/no opinion	16

* Currently employed: 34%.

CBS: Would you favor a national policy that requires workers in general to be tested for the AIDS virus, or would that be an unfair invasion of privacy?

	10/86
Yes, favor	36%
No	53
Depends (vol.)	6
No opinion	5

CBS: Do you think insurance companies should be permitted to require people in groups with a high risk of getting AIDS to be tested for the AIDS virus before giving them insurance coverage, or is that unfair to people in these groups?

	10/86
Yes	40%
No	50
No opinion	10

EDUCATION

YCS: At what age do you think that children should *first* be taught about AIDS in school?*

	11/86
By the age of 8	23%
When 9 or 10	27
When 11 or 12	25
When 13 or 14	17
Or older than this	5
Not sure	3

Do you think that sex education courses for children who are eight should include information about:

	*Yes***	*No*	*Not Sure*
The dangers of AIDS	38%	56%	6%

Do you think that sex education courses for children who are twelve should include information about:

	*Yes***	*No*	*Not Sure*
The dangers of AIDS	93%	6%	1%

* Among those who agree that children should be taught about AIDS in school—83% of sample.

** Among those who think that sex education courses should be taught in school—86% of sample.

Gallup: Some people feel that an important way to combat AIDS is to provide more education in grade school about sex and sexually transmitted diseases, including the use of condoms, before students become sexually active. Others feel that this kind of education does more harm than good. Which comes closer to your view?

	11/86
More sex education	70%
Does more harm than good	25
DK	5

Protective Measures: Behavior Change

ABC/DN, ABC/WP, CBS/NYT, Harris, NBC, CBS: Is there anything in particular you have done to avoid getting AIDS?

	ABC/DN[a] *9/85*	*ABC/WP*[a] *9/85*	*CBS/NYT* *9/85*	*Harris**[b] *11/85*	*NBC**[c] *11/85*	*NBC*[d] *1/86*	*CBS* *10/86*	*CBS*[e] *10/86*
Yes	35%	22%	13%	41%	11%	7%	18%	11%
No	65	77	85	57	88	93	80	86
DK	—	1	2	2	1	—	2	3

* No follow-up questions asked

[a] Is there anything you yourself are doing to avoid exposing yourself to AIDS?

[b] Do you take any special steps or precautions to avoid catching AIDS, or not?

[c] Has public concern about AIDS caused you to change any part of your daily routine?

[d] Since you became aware of AIDS, have you changed your sexual behavior in any way?

[e] How about you personally? Have you changed your sexual habits because you are worried about getting AIDS?

If yes, what have you done?

	ABC/ DN[a] *9/85*	*ABC/ WP*[a] *9/85*	*CBS/ NYT*[b] *9/85*	*NBC*[c] *1/86*	*CBS*[b] *10/86*	*CBS*[b] *10/86*
Limit number of partners	8%	6%	—	92%	—	—
Sex with one partner	8	10	—	—	3%	2%
Avoid homosexual acts/sex	—	—	1%	—	1	—
Cut down on sex	11	11	—	—	—	—
No sex	2	2	3	—	1	—
Use/partner use condom	2	2	—	49	—	—
Avoid homosexuals	13	17	1	—	—	—
Avoid people with AIDS	—	6	—	—	—	—
Avoid prostitutes	—	1	—	—	—	—
Socially careful	—	14	2	—	2	—
Careful who/what touch	—	—	1	—	3	—
Avoid needle drugs	—	6	—	—	—	—
Keep clean	—	5	1	—	3	—
Clean home/office more	—	1	—	—	—	—
Change public places I go	—	1	—	—	—	—
Avoid/more careful using public restrooms, etc.	—	25	1	—	—	—
Avoid/more careful using gyms, public pools, etc.	—	3	—	—	—	—
Use restrooms less	—	4	—	—	—	—
Avoid blood transfusions	—	11	1	—	1	—
Cut down/not giving blood	—	3	—	—	—	—
More careful/more careful selecting sexual partner	—	—	—	95	—	7
Other	77	12	—	—	4	1
No opinion	—	3	2	—	—	1

[a] More than one response allowed. Percentages are of those saying yes.

[b] Only one response coded. Percentages sum to those saying yes.

[c] Respondents were specifically asked if they had done these three behaviors. Percentages are of those saying yes, they had done.

Gallup: Have you personally or have people that you know taken any of the following precautions to try to reduce the chances of contracting AIDS?

		7/83[a]	*8/85*	*11/86*
Avoiding people you know or suspect to be homosexuals?	Yes		13%	18%
	No		77	72
	DK		10	10
Refusing elective surgery that would require blood transfusions?	Yes		21	27
	No		70	65
	DK		9	8
Taking any other precautions?	Yes		6	
	No		87	
	DK		7	
Using a condom?*	Yes			32
	No			55
	DK			13
Taking more care in choice of sex partners?*	Yes			58
	No			34
	DK			8
Avoiding certain places where homosexuals may be present?	Yes	21%	28	33
	No	67	65	55
	DK	12	7	8

* No trend information.

[a] Are you or other people in your community taking extra steps to avoid being in places where homosexuals are likely to be, or not?

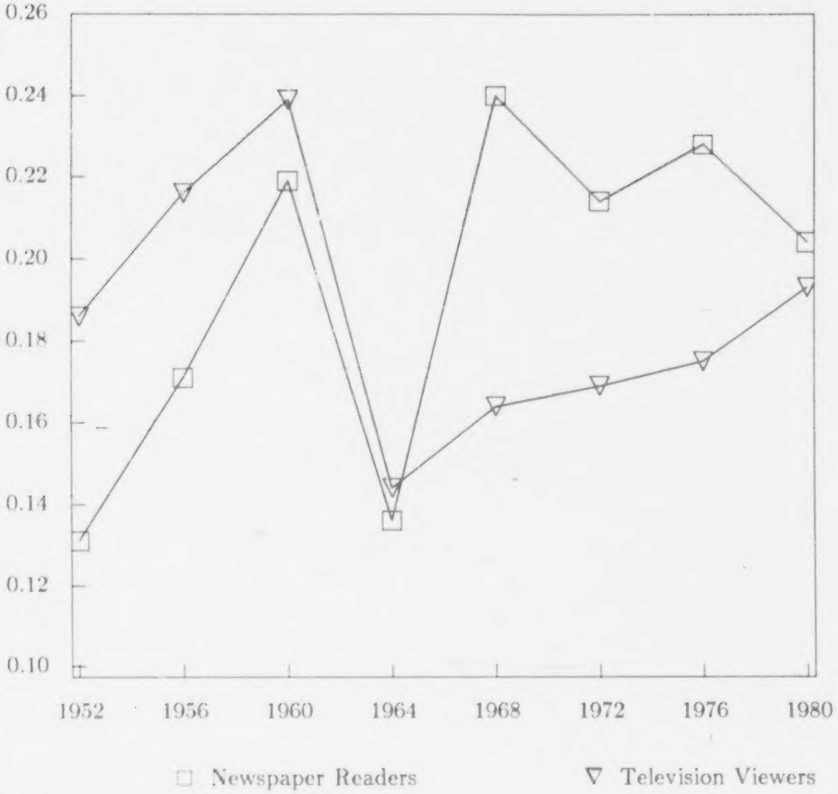

Figure 3. Weight of Party Identification

identification was more important to the vote of the television group than the newspaper group. Given both the social composition of television's audience and its programming, this is perhaps not surprising. In 1964, however, the weight of party dropped precipitously for both media-use groups, in part a consequence of the extensive defection of Republicans from Barry Goldwater. After 1964, the weight of party returned to "normal" for newspaper readers but not for television viewers. Candidate-specific factors—especially personal qualities—became increasingly important to the vote of television viewers after 1964.

Discussion

The data presented here support the notion that television has played a role in the gradual personalizing of American presidential elections. The short-term elements of elections, particularly voter reactions to candidates, have become more important at the expense of long-term elements, such as party identification and citizen attitudes toward the parties. The weight of attitudes toward the parties (not shown here), as measured by open-ended questions like those used for the candidates, were once among the best predictors of the vote, but over the eight elections have become nearly irrelevant.

No simple argument is advanced here that television has caused a "politics of personality." Without comparable measures of voting criteria prior to 1952, we cannot know if candidate-orientedness was higher or lower in elections before television. The behavioral changes examined here are plausibly linked with other political and social changes, which are themselves related to the advent of television. The efficacy with which television reaches potential voters has changed the campaign behavior of candidates and the personal traits they stress. Campaign finance reform and the rising cost of television advertising has further encouraged candidates to accomodate the needs of television news organizations. And with the growth of primary elections, the mode of nomination has come to reinforce the mode of election. Nominees are apt to be those most skilled in electioneering by television.

These changes mean that the "reality" of the campaign available via other media, the word-of-mouth, differs from what it once was. Candidates run as people (consciously warm, benevolent people), and this is apparent whether one watches television, talks to friends who do, or reads newspaper accounts (written by journalists who watch the candidates perform for television).[5]

At the same time that television has supplanted the political parties as a central source of campaign information for voters, generational and social change has undermined the "New Deal" socioeconomic basis of the party alignment. This change has occurred within the context of broader social forces that have reduced the power of traditional institutions to exert social control. According to some observers, this "sociological release" leads toward individuation and away from categorization in object appraisal. Left without familiar guides in a

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[5] Changes in the content and appeal of political television interact with the changes in political campaigning to produce important methodological consequences for studies attempting to identify behavioral effects of television. Virtually everyone, regardless of their attention to the media, or the particular mix of media they employ, receives candidate-oriented information during presidential campaigns. People with little interest in politics may watch television news for its entertainment value; in reporting that they rely on television for campaign information they are grouped with citizens who are intensely interested in the campaign but who may lack the verbal skills to make efficient use of newspapers. Individuals who say they rely on newspapers are likely to watch television news, too. And those who avoid television news may not escape campaign spot advertising if they choose to spend an occasional quiet evening watching prime-time television. All of this hinders efforts to identify an independent effect of television by blurring the boundaries between the media-use groups.

"cold society," the individual must find other bases of choice. As Robert Lane has suggested, the voter may "rely on a kind of leadership selection process that is cognate to something he knows; his selection of friends" (Lane, 1978:444).

Thus what the evidence presented in this paper may demonstrate is not so much a reaction of voters to the particular stimuli of televised politics—although such a direct effect is plausible—as a more general increase in the importance of candidate factors resulting from various political changes in which television has played a role. Candidate-orientedness has increased for everyone, regardless of how they obtain campaign information.

While concern about the personal qualities of leaders is not misplaced, the trend toward greater candidate orientedness is rightly bemoaned. One hazard of this was expressed by Walter Lippmann, who warned against "the intensification of feeling and the degradation of significance" in politics (Lippmann, 1925). Citizens may be forced to "vote by feeling" because they feel they lack adequate information in an atomized political system.

A second hazard is that candidacies emphasizing personal qualities must necessarily be isolated, each one disconnected from those preceding and those following. Accountability and public control of public policy are dangerously attenuated because retrospective voting on substance may be irrelevant and prospective voting on substance may be impossible.

Television's effects on politics ultimately may depend more upon what citizens believe television can do than upon the medium itself. Kurt Lang and Gladys Engel Lang expressed this notion well when they wrote:

> . . . there is a widespread belief in the intimacy of television, and this, in itself, makes a difference. When the formats of political telecasts are adapted to this belief, they emphasize the personal qualities of politicians rather than his purely political qualifications, or how well equipped he is to handle a particular role. At the same time, viewers believe they have "seen for themselves," and their visual impressions suggest to them the "real" personal qualities of the familiar face. In all of this, the contribution of television is made through its sensory realism, through the emphasis it places on symbols directly accessible to experience. The heterogeneity of views on complex policy matters and public problems can be factored down to simple alternatives. The search for "truth" becomes a search for "trust." (Lang and Lang, 1968:210–211)

Television as an institution is not to blame, but neither is it simply a neutral tool. The trend toward a politics of personality is likely to be countered only through the revitalization of institutions that give continuity to politics and ones that encourage participatory rather than vicarious politics. Sadly, television today is neither of these.

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THE PERSISTENCE OF POLITICAL ATTITUDES AMONG 1960s CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVISTS

GERALD MARWELL
MICHAEL T. AIKEN AND
N. J. DEMERATH III

Abstract A scattering of recent research has studied the current political beliefs and attitudes of individuals identified as "1960s activists." In contrast to much of the treatment accorded such people in the popular media, this research tends to find most of these activists currently liberal on a wide variety of political topics. However, in the absence of panel data, most of this research has had to assess any change in the activists' attitudes either by assuming the activists' past positions or by trusting to their retrospective reports.

In this paper we report on panel data from a large group of white activists, mostly students, who spent the summer of 1965 organizing voter registration drives in Southern black communities. In some specific areas on which the activists tended to hold rather extreme positions in 1965, they may have moderated by 1984. However, their overall pattern of response on a wide variety of issues is basically stable over this twenty-year period.

Apparitions from the 1960s haunt the nation's rostrums, debating the topics of today. Neither Jerry Rubin nor Abbie Hoffman occupies a position of power or excels in the arts or in sports or in any other field notorious. Yet the audiences come, and the mass media ogle these two middle-aged men whose celebrity rests wholly on the radical Yippie postures of their youth. Rubin is the star. His opinions, proscriptions, analyses, and persona have moderated with age. Although no Reaganite, he has come to see the virtues of hard work, the system, the society, and the coin of the realm. Hard as it may be to believe, he is

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GERALD MARWELL is Professor of Sociology at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. MICHAEL T. AIKEN is Professor of Sociology and Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Pennsylvania. N. J. DEMERATH III is Professor of Sociology at the University of Massachusetts–Amherst. Research for this paper was funded in part by National Science Foundation Grant No. SES-8408693. Additional funding was provided by the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation. We would like to thank Irene Giniat and Mimi Kim for their assistance and Lawrence Bobo for his suggestions.

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now a stockbroker. He plays for us the prodigal son, lets us assign radicalism to the callowness of youth, and gives proof to the adage that age brings wisdom—or at least greater conservatism.

Hoffman has received less attention. Unrepentant, seemingly unchanged in philosophy, he argues still for the bankruptcy of the system, against the confinement of the mores, and for the ability of the middle-aged to retain the ideals and meanings of their youth. Of course, he is not himself as active nor as prominent as before. It is not his time. But he sees himself as having retained his moral and philosophical integrity. He is, perhaps, less interesting. Stability is seldom as good a story as change.

Let these two icons stand for opposing propositions about the philosophical life cycle of aging activists. DeMartini (1983:196) has summarized the literature, contrasting the position of Eisenstadt (1956), Parsons (1963), and fellow travelers with the views of Mannheim (1952), Braungart (1974), and others. The former take the "Rubin" view that "political protest [is] a result of youthful idealism which will mellow with age and the pressures of work-role socialization," while the latter see Hoffman as representing the expectation that "the unique historical experiences and family socialization of the youth generation lay the foundation for a political commitment that will influence future adult politics." Noting the meager supply of empirical research that might be used to adjudicate between these two positions, DeMartini nevertheless summarizes the available data. He concludes that Hoffman is probably somewhat more representative of the activists studied, although there is some truth to the "mellowing" hypothesis as well. The studies seem to suggest that former activists remain relatively active but that their activism moves toward more conventional political processes and away from uninstitutionalized practices such as demonstrations and civil disobedience.

Unfortunately, all of this research has severe shortcomings for addressing the central issues. As an example, consider the often-cited work of Nassi (1981). Thirteen years after the Free Speech Movement sit-in in Sproul Hall on the Berkeley campus (1964), she obtained a list of the "800" students who had been arrested (the *San Francisco Examiner* (1985), using presumably the same list, reports the number as 783). From that population Nassi finally generated a total of 30 respondents, all of whom lived in San Francisco. The *San Francisco Examiner*'s recent special issue interviewed 49, which represented 38% of their selected subsample. In fact, five of the seven studies cited by DiMartini have 40 or fewer subjects and can hardly lay claim to representative samples. The two studies he reviews that have larger samples also make little effort to assure representativeness. For example, Meyer and Maidenberg (1970) used a mail-out and simply accepted the low response rate that resulted. An equally important limitation of these two studies, however, is that each examines attitude change over a period of less than five years. Thus, neither can be said to follow the activists from "youth" to "maturity."

A second, equally important problem is that none of these studies actually measures attitude *change*, since they do not follow the activists' attitudes and beliefs over time. For example, Nassi reports on no measures of her subjects' attitudes or beliefs in 1964. At one point she says that "Their radicalism has . . . waned over the intervening years, and they seem less resolved that change occur only outside of the political system," but she has no data from which she could conclude that her subjects felt any differently in 1964 than they did in 1977. She has only her own (and the press's) assumptions about how these individuals would have answered similar questions when they were younger.

This limitation characterizes virtually all studies available to date. No measures of attitudes were taken while the subjects were active participants, so no changes in attitudes can be shown. Because indicators of prior activism are used to select the samples, radical attitudes are assumed to have characterized the samples at that earlier time. Lack of current activism, or moderate political attitudes, are then *assumed,* not shown, to represent change.

One study that does have panel attitude data for activists is DeMartini's own research (1985) using survey data collected by Jennings and Niemi (1981) in 1965 and 1973. The 1965 data, however, were collected when the subjects were high school seniors, before many had participated in any protests or demonstrations. The second wave was collected while several were still graduate students, and within four or five years of their activism. Again, however, DeMartini concludes that the data generally support the view that activists maintain their political attitudes over time, with many of their attitudes becoming even more radical. However, some of this change may reflect the effects of participation on attitudes rather than the effects of maturation or the passage of time.

The Present Study

In contrast to the very clear limitations of previous research regarding sampling and data quality, we here report on a unique data set: a panel study of 145 committed activists whose political attitudes were measured three times over a nineteen- to twenty-year period—a period that began in their youthful twenties and stretched into their middle-aged forties. The panel does not suffer so severely from the problems that mitigate the value of previous research. The sample size is large. It represents a large fraction of the appropriate population, and we can get at least some feel for its representativeness. The attitudes at issue are measured both in 1965 and in 1984–85, so that individual change can be directly observed. In addition, our measures range over a variety of specific attitudes. Our analysis is therefore able to go beyond the simple trichotomy of "no change," "more conservative," and "more liberal." More conservative regarding which issues, we can ask. More liberal how?

On the other hand, our analysis is constrained by decisions made 20 years ago. We can see change only in variables measured in waves 1 or 2. We didn't think then to ask about Israel or Palestinians, Feminism or Gay Rights, Deregulation or Tax Reform, or other issues that have become important in today's politics. In this business, foresight is rarely 20/20. Furthermore, the value of these data is limited by the absence of a clear comparison group. Still, we believe these data are relatively unique for the purposes at hand.

The first wave of these data was collected at the height of the civil rights movement—the summer of 1965. Mobilized by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) headed by the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., a large group of youthful volunteers fanned out over the black communities of the South, primarily to work on voter registration drives, but also to help with community organization and similar activities. During the training sessions conducted by SCLC prior to sending the workers into the field, 223 of the volunteers filled out a long questionnaire that we had prepared. After the summer program had ended, the workers filled out a second questionnaire that was sent to them by mail. Most of the volunteers were students, most were white, and most returned to their schools or home communities after the summer. Since the experiences and recruitment of blacks were so different for this group, and since so few of these subjects were black, we report here only on the whites. For a complete description of these first studies see Demerath, Marwell, and Aiken, 1971.

Two summers ago—nineteen years after the 1965 summer—we searched the country to find as many of these civil rights activists as we could, to see what had happened to them, and how they had changed, in nearly two decades. If they were twenty in 1965 their youth had gone by 1984. They were turning forty and middle-aged. It seemed an appropriate time.

The activists were not all easy to find. We are a mobile society. Nevertheless, we eventually got 145 of the activists to fill out a third wave of questionnaires. A check on some 13 background factors and approximately 20 attitudinal responses on the first wave of questionnaires revealed only one significant difference between those who responded and those whom we did not find or who did not respond: The respondents are disproportionately male. We believe that this disparity reflects our greater difficulty in locating women, presumably because so many changed their names. Eighty percent of those respondents we did find, male and female, answered the questionnaire.

Results

Before turning to the core of our analysis, it is probably useful to look at some general political information about these subjects. These nonpanel data consistently support an image of stability in political matters. For example, these subjects are uniformly left in their voting patterns. Only two voted for Reagan in 1980; four voted for Ford in 1976, and not one voted for Nixon in 1972. However, 22% did vote for Anderson, about 7% have consistently voted for third parties, mostly radical, and only 3% or less do not vote.

In Table 1 we present the responses of our subjects to nine political attitude items taken directly from the Institute for Social Research's 1982 American National Election Study. Their mean responses are compared with those of ISR's national postelection sample, after the latter group is standardized on education and age to fit more closely the distributions of the activists on these variables. Since virtually none of the activists was under age 37 or over age 55 or had less than a high school degree plus some additional education, subjects from the national sample who fit those categories were excluded from the analysis. Weighting was done with the remainder of the sample.

A quick glance at the table reveals that all of our data manipulation was somewhat superfluous. The activists are so different from the population as a whole that the results would probably have been the same if they were compared to any age–education grouping. Simply stated, the activists and the comparison group differ significantly ($p < .001$) on every one of the nine items. The reason for this is quite clear. Except for the item on women's rights, the mean of the national sample is near the midpoint of the available response scale. Except for the item on abortion, the mean responses of the activists are closer to the liberal extreme of the available scale than to the midpoint. For all items, the activists are much more liberal than the general public, and in general their responses tend to be the most liberal possible.

Answers to all of these items would support the findings of other research on sixties activists: liberal then, they are liberal now. And the finding would be based on similar kinds of data—current attitudes are measured currently, while past attitudes are inferred from past behavior, or sometimes from the subjects' recall.

Table 1. Attitudes Toward Current Political Issues

	Means[a]	
	Activists	Public[b]
1. Do you approve or disapprove of President Reagan's handling of nuclear arms control?	5.59	2.68
2. Do you approve or disapprove of President Reagan's handling of the protection of the environment?	5.73	3.11
3. Do you approve or disapprove of President Reagan's handling of the balancing of the national budget?	5.37	3.28
4. We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. Here is a seven-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal to extremely conservative. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought about it much?	1.90	4.16
5. Recently there has been a lot of talk about women's rights. Some people feel that women should have an equal role with men in running businesses, industry, and government. Others feel that women's place is in the home. Where would you place yourself on this scale? Or haven't you thought much about this?	1.27	2.40
6. Some people feel the government in Washington should make every effort to improve the social and economic position of blacks and other minority groups. Others feel that the government should not make any special effort to help minorities because they should help themselves. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought about it much?	2.18	4.44
7. Some people feel the government in Washington should see to it that every person has a job and a good standard of living. Others think the government should just let each person get ahead on his own. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought about it much?	2.38	4.61
8. Some people think the government should provide fewer services, even in areas such as health and education, in order to reduce spending. Other people feel it is important for the government to provide many more services even if it means an increase in spending. Where would you place	5.33	3.60

Table 1. (Continued)

	Means[a]	
	Activists	Public[b]
yourself on the following scale, or haven't you thought about it much?		
9. There has been some discussion about abortion during recent years. Which one of the following opinions best agrees with your view? (Scale from "by law an abortion should never be permitted," to "by law a woman should always be able to obtain an abortion as a matter of personal choice.")	3.93	3.27

[a] All mean differences in the table are significant at the .001 level (t-test). A low score indicates approval of President Reagan or agreement with the thesis of the question, a high score indicates disapproval and disagreement.

[b] Means for the "public" are adjusted through weightings determined by the age and education standardizations described in the text. Data are from the 1982 ISR National Postelection Survey.

Results from our panel data are much more complex. There is no single message. We find stability and change, consistency and contradiction. Where there is change, it is often between an extremely liberal position and a more ordinary but still liberal response. Yet this may be change that is important—for it can signal new patterns of behavior and response.

In Table 2 the attitudinal questions on which we have repeated measures are divided into four sets, each with a somewhat different content. The separation is for ease of explication and is not based on any specific analysis. Although our previous work on the 1965 data used factor analytic techniques to establish scales combining many of these items, the relationships among the items did not remain stable over time, and changes (or stabilities) in these scales mask the actual patterns of response that appear in the individual items. For example, the first four items in Table 2 comprised a very strong "nonviolence" index in waves 1 and 2. In wave 3, the first three items continue to reflect basically the same content. However, the fourth item is clearly no longer behaving as part of the same group. A look at its content suggests that variance in response to the item may no longer reflect differences among subjects in their attitudes toward nonviolence so much as disagreements among them regarding the nature of the "current position" of blacks in the South and the United States. A more detailed discussion of this issue will require a separate paper.

Table 2. Attitudes Toward Political and Other Issues Among Civil Rights Volunteers, Spring 1965 (t1), Fall 1965 (t2), and Summer 1984 (t3)

	Means			Significance		
	t1	t2	t3	t1–t2	t1–t3	t2–t3
I. The South and the movement						
1. It is morally correct to use the threat of violence as a strategy to avoid violent attacks from others.	4.65	4.35	3.70	*	*	*
2. Violence is proper when it is the only way of defending yourself or others.	4.20	4.06	2.82		*	*
3. The civil rights movement may have to abandon the policy of nonviolence if long-established Southern customs are to be changed.	5.37	5.14	4.79		*	*
4. It would be better for the black to remain in his current position if violence were the only way to change that position.	4.62	4.65	4.78			
5. When the case does not concern black civil rights, the black usually receives a fair trial in a state or local court in the deep South.	5.30	5.19	4.44		*	*
6. Police in the deep South are generally recruited from among the least qualified segments of the population.	3.01	2.77	3.17			*
7. Most state and local courts in the deep South tolerate illegal police methods.	1.99	1.97	2.74		*	*

Table 2. (Continued)

	Means			Significance		
	t1	t2	t3	t1–t2	t1–t3	t2–t3
8. Most whites in the deep South feel a good deal of shame about segregation and would like an easy way to end it without a loss of pride.	3.76	4.37	3.95	*		*
9. The battle for Southern civil rights is basically over. The local blacks need no further help to reap the benefits; they can and should do it alone.	[a]	5.41	4.81			*
10. The only progress that can be expected in the deep South in the next ten years is token integration.	4.67	4.41	4.14	*	*	
11. Most whites in the deep South are willing to integrate in many areas, but they are prevented from doing so by the white power structure.	3.80	4.10	4.18	*	*	
12. Most whites in the deep South know that society is changing and that they will have to go along with integration in the end.	2.60	2.76	2.92		*	
13. The racial crisis in the U.S. should be resolved on a local level without the intervention of the federal government.	5.27	5.03	5.21	*		
14. Any lasting changes in civil rights in the South will have to come from the Southerners themselves rather than from outside pressures.	3.39	3.16	3.20			

Table 2. (Continued)

	Means			Significance		
	t1	t2	t3	t1–t2	t1–t3	t2–t3
II. American society and politics						
1. I favor having our government continue to give economic aid to other countries such as India/Nigeria.	1.83	2.03	2.83		*	*
2. The U.S. Justice Department does as much as it possibly can, given the laws on civil rights within which it must work.	3.33	4.39	4.92	*	*	*
3. In a democracy it is proper for a citizen to disobey any laws he thinks prejudicial or unjust.	[a]	3.18	3.00			*
4. In view of past discrimination blacks should now be given jobs ahead of whites.	[a]	3.73	3.45			*
5. The racial problem will only be solved when all lower class groups, white and black, combine in common struggle.	2.53	2.89	3.00	*	*	
6. The American political system has proven itself incapable of coping with the problem of discrimination against blacks.	4.17	3.96	3.71	*		
7. The continuing plight of American blacks has caused me to have grave doubts about the superiority of democracy as a political system.	4.35	4.35	4.57			
8. The problem of the black in America is basically economic.	3.22	3.36	3.36			

Table 2. (Continued)

	Means			Significance		
	t1	t2	t3	t1–t2	t1–t3	t2–t3
9. American culture is sick and moving along the road to destruction.	3.64	3.56	3.65			
10. Most northern state and local judges are usually willing to go along with a "frame" of anyone they consider to have "dangerous" ideas.	4.26	4.33	4.18			
11. I believe there is at least a 50–50 chance of nuclear war in the next ten years.	3.59	3.30	3.18		*	
12. The U.S. should try to initiate negotiations in an area like Vietnam/El Salvador and should avoid military participation.	1.76	1.71	1.77			
13. I believe that a larger proportion of the federal government's budget should be allocated to poverty, medical care, education, etc.	1.41	1.50	1.56			
14. Even though freedom of speech for all groups is a worthwhile goal, it is unfortunately necessary to restrict the freedom of certain political groups.	[a]	5.23	5.04			
III. Relative importance of issues						
1. Reduction of poverty through political action	2.87	2.54	2.76	*		*
2. Increase student rights in American colleges and universities	4.26	4.18	4.54		*	*
3. Aid to foreign countries through VISTA and other programs	3.58	4.48	4.16		*	*

Table 2. (Continued)

	Means			Significance		
	t1	t2	t3	t1–t2	t1–t3	t2–t3
4. Ending capital punishment in the U.S.	3.77	3.90	4.17		*	*
5. World nuclear disarmament	2.13	1.76	1.76	*	*	
6. Reduction of juvenile delinquency in the U.S.	3.59	3.70	3.51			
IV. Other						
1. The main thing in life is for a person to want to do something important.	[a]	3.69	5.10			*
2. It is only when a person devotes himself to an ideal or cause that life becomes meaningful.	[a]	2.93	3.39			*
3. Most people just don't know what's good for them.	[a]	4.23	4.62			*
4. In this complicated world of ours, the only way we can know what's going on is to rely on leaders or experts who can be trusted.	[a]	4.76	5.10			*
5. People should do what is morally right regardless of the consequences.	[a]	2.79	3.03			
6. You can't blame people for taking all they can get.	4.73	4.69	4.68			
7. There are two kinds of people in this world: those who are for the truth and those who are against the truth.	[a]	5.32	5.26			
8. To compromise with our political opponents is dangerous because it usually leads to the betrayal of our own side.	[a]	4.12	4.37			

Table 2. (Continued)

	Means			Significance		
	t1	t2	t3	t1–t2	t1–t3	t2–t3
9. It is said that American business organizations are unrivaled in their efficiency. The civil rights movement would do well to model itself along such lines.	[a]	4.76	4.60			
10. The businessman and the manufacturer are more important to society than the artist and the scholar.	5.15	5.13	4.90			

NOTES: The response categories for all items in sections I, II, and IV were as follows: 1. Strongly agree; 2. Moderately agree; 3. Agree somewhat; 4. Disagree somewhat; 5. Moderately disagree; 6. Strongly disagree.

The response categories for all items in section III were as follows: 1. Much more important than black progress; 2. Somewhat more important than black progress; 3. About the same importance as black progress; 4. Somewhat less important than black progress; 5. Much less important than black progress.

[a] This question was not asked in the first wave (t1) of the research.

* Change in the response over this period was significant at the .05 level.

The four rough areas into which we have divided Table 2 may be summarized as: attitudes toward the South and the civil rights movement, attitudes toward American society and politics in general, a panel of items in which several social issues are evaluated regarding their relative importance, and a residual category comprised mostly of general philosophical perspectives on life and human nature.

A preliminary scan of the table suggests that these content differences are related to patterns of attitude change. The first set of items, for example, seems to tap attitudes that underwent quite a bit of change over this time period. Since the set includes those items most directly involved with attitudes toward the South and the Southern civil rights movement, we believe that pattern of change makes sense. The South has changed, and the movement has changed. There is no reason to expect these former activists to be blind to such historical facts.

The first four items in the first set all pertain to attitudes toward nonviolence—an issue of paramount importance as a strategy and as a moral position to the pacifist Dr. King. Our data argue that a statistically significant reduction in the volunteers' commitment to nonviolence took place both during their stay in the South and after leaving the south. This change may be due to several different causes. Although we cannot demonstrate the validity of our interpretation, we generally think that the process was one of declining adherence to a radical position, once the immediate social ties supporting that position were removed. The volunteers were recruited, and trained in nonviolent response, by an organization explicitly committed to a philosophy of nonviolence. No wonder they gave nonviolent attitude responses during their training sessions. Frustrating and violent experiences in the South made nonviolence difficult for many, and even the liberal community in which most volunteers chose to live after leaving the South does not agree with a radical "turn-the-other-cheek" posture. Under such circumstances, a reduction in nonviolent attitudes on the part of the volunteers is surely what we should have expected.

On the other hand, it is important to note that even in 1984 (wave 3) most volunteers remained generally favorable toward nonviolence. If we dichotomize the items by collapsing all "agree" responses and all "disagree" responses, we find that most of the activists (57%) still do not believe that it is correct to use the threat of violence to avoid violence from others. A sizable minority (26%) do not even think violence is proper as a means of defending themselves. The activists, in other words, are a rather distinct group of people—still "leftish," still pacifist. There is stability. But there is also change in the moderation of their responses.

There is also change in many of the attitudes expressed toward the South and Southern whites in wave 2. In general, these changes reflect a softening of the strong hostility that was previously felt, especially toward Southern courts. The major reason for the change, we would guess, is that the South, especially Southern courts, *has* changed. But note again that the activists still dominantly believe that Southern courts tolerate illegal police methods (77% "agree") and that blacks do not get fair trials (80%).

Several additional items regarding the South show little aggregate change since wave 2. Many of them are attitudes strongly affected by the experience in the South itself (i.e., between waves 1 and 2) that have tended to stabilize over time, or even move back slightly toward the original wave 1 opinion.

The second set of questions contains many fewer items that reflect attitudinal change. Furthermore, those items on which the activists do seem to evidence aggregate change do not suggest a very clear pattern. There is some decline in support for foreign aid and of belief in the U.S. Justice Department, along with the continuation of a gradual increase in pessimism regarding a future nuclear war. All these trends seem to suggest a continuing decline in trust for major federal government institutions. In days gone by, such attitudes would generally be interpreted as conservative in direction. In the language of the sixties they are consistent with more left-wing alienation. In contrast, the activists are now more likely to support problack job discrimination and also civil disobedience. These are unambiguously more radical positions. Again, none of these changes reflects a movement among the activists from preponderantly "pro" to preponderantly "anti" or vice versa. They are, instead, the aggregation of moderate changes in a moderate proportion of the group.

Consideration of the remainder of the items represented in this second set indicates a remarkable level of stability regarding a very wide range of issues. Particularly notable for anyone who expected to find high levels of "radicalization" in this group is the fact that there is little or no increase or decrease in radical antidemocratic sentiment, support for welfare, or broad anti-Americanism.

The third set of items in Table 1 has a different structure from the previous two sets and a very different result as well. In all three waves, the activists were asked to compare the importance of "black progress" with the importance of each of six other political goals. Two of these alternative goals did not change between waves 2 and 3 in the way the activists compared them with black progress. Three of the remaining four alternative goals—reduction of poverty, student rights, and ending capital punishment—declined in their perceived relative importance. Aid to foreign countries increased in perceived relative importance but only, we believe, because it had decreased so sharply between waves 1 and 2. We should note that of all the items, only nuclear disarmament was rated as more important than black progress on the average in any of the three waves, and only the reduction of poverty was ever considered near equal in importance. For the civil rights workers as a whole, all other goals were consistently rated as substantially less important than black progress.

The fourth set of items in Table 2 contains data regarding ten general attitudes that are not so clearly political, but which probably have political implications. The table indicates results that are similar to those reported for the previous three item sets—results that reflect both stability and change. The first four items in this set represent change. They show the activists becoming less "idealistic" and less cynical about the ability of most people to take care of their own ideas and decisions. The six subsequent items, which reflect little change, are mostly cynical or probusiness statements that never appealed to the activists in the first place. Since the activists responded so extremely to these items in 1965 they were unlikely to become even more hostile by wave 3, and we would be unable to capture any such change because of the ceiling on our scales, in any case.

Conclusions

The sense we have of the changes in these activists' attitudes is both that they were localized and that they generally reflect a softening, rather than a discarding, of fairly extreme positions held in 1965. Some of the changes came through the natural process of living for a long period of time as the most extreme person in one's group. Some of the change simply reflects changes in the world to which the activists were responding. As is the case in most studies of this kind, it is very difficult for us to convincingly disentangle age from period effects in attitude change. The tenor of the times, rather than the experiences of their years, may influence their ideas in certain directions.

In all, however, we see much more stability than change in the activists' general ideological stance. They may be somewhat softer and less likely to take extreme positions. They may be uncertain about the utility of certain kinds of activities in which they once believed. On the whole, however, the group remains liberal, attitudinally committed to the needs of minorities and other disadvantaged groups. Our own sense is that these changes are mostly the product of age, not period. They reflect more or less what we would expect of somewhat more mature and complex individuals who have held on to their essential beliefs.

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UNDER WAY AND HERE TO STAY
PARTY REALIGNMENT IN THE 1980s?

HELMUT NORPOTH

Abstract In recent years, the Republican party has sharply narrowed the Democratic edge in overall party identification. Using *New York Times*/CBS News surveys (1980–1986) and earlier NES/CPS surveys, this analysis probes several explanations for that partisan change: generational replacement, conversion, and mobilization. The findings rule out conversion, give some support to mobilization, but emphasize the historically unique surge toward the GOP among the young since 1980. This break with the parental partisan legacy signals the prospect of a party realignment through generational replacement.

Ever since Eisenhower's presidential campaign conquered the White House, the emergence of a Republican majority in the American electorate has been the object of much speculation. Some observers have eagerly prophesied that prospect, but others have shrugged it off as wishful thinking. Each new Republican conquest or successful defense of the White House revives the speculation, while electoral analysts sort out the evidence pro and con. That a party realignment is overdue, many would agree, but that one is actually under way, and that whatever is under way is here to stay, many would dispute.

There is no denying that over the last three decades Republicans have done exceedingly well in winning presidential elections. Although, for the most part, they faced a Congress controlled by the other party, they could often rely on enough conservative members of Congress to govern effectively. In that sense, a party realignment may have long been consummated, but that it is not the same as saying that the Republican party has displaced the Democrats as the favorite of the American electorate.

HELMUT NORPOTH is a Professor of Political Science at the State University of New York, Stony Brook. A note of thanks goes to the *New York Times* and CBS News for making available the data for this study. The research presented here has greatly benefited from discussions with Paul Allen Beck, George Bishop, Thad Brown, Adam Clymer, Shanto Iyengar, John Petrocik, Martin Plissner, Fred Steeper, and from a joint project with Barbara Farah. An earlier version of this article was presented at the 41st annual meeting of AAPOR in St. Petersburg, May 14–19, 1986.

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Our interest focuses on the basic partisan loyalties of American voters, commonly known as their "party identifications" (Campbell et al., 1960). While no immutable biological trait, this identification is no fickle opinion swaying with the prevailing wind. To be sure, a good portion of voters will not be guided by their identifications in casting their votes in any given election, but in most cases their party identifications have survived such acts of infidelity. Though aided by defections of Democratic voters, Eisenhower's and Nixon's victories failed to upend the basic partisan division and instead turned out to be "deviating elections." Given the nature of party identification, a shift of basic loyalties massive enough to produce a realignment is bound to be a rare event.

Historically, party realignments have occurred in cyclical fashion: in the 1830s, 1860s, 1890s, and 1930s. The 1970s hence were due for another; and indeed there was no lack of symptoms. The majority party suffered from a sharp division over policy issues and along broad ideological lines. A seemingly hopeless combination of high inflation, unemployment, and no growth befell the national economy, undermining the historic reputation of the Democrats as the party of prosperity. Meanwhile in 1980, the Republican presidential candidate promised both a radical departure from the traditional New Deal policies and a resolution of the national condition diagnosed as "malaise" by the incumbent. Carter then became the first (elected) president to be voted out since 1932, when Hoover's defeat ushered in the New Deal realignment.

Notions of Party Realignment

Like few other notions, "party realignment" intrigues politicians as much as it does journalistic and scholarly observers of politics (see Key, 1955; Campbell et al., 1960; Phillips, 1969; Burnham, 1970; Broder, 1972; Sundquist, 1973; Petrocik, 1981). The most common notion of realignment is one where the overall balance of party support in the electorate shifts from one party to another. This may happen abruptly in a "realigning election" (Campbell et al., 1960: ch. 19) or, as Key (1955) called it, a "critical election." But it may also happen more gradually in a realigning era, by means of a "secular realignment."

Another notion of realignment focuses on the composition of a party's electoral support rather than on the aggregate balance of the total electorate (Petrocik, 1981). Here the key aspect concerns the social groups that comprise a party's electoral coalition. A realignment occurs in the sense that one or more core groups of party A move to align themselves with party B, like blacks moving toward the Democratic party, white southerners toward the Republican party. So long as the flows across party lines roughly match one another the overall balance in the electorate may not shift to any significant degree. Nevertheless, this sorting out of party clienteles most likely results in a changed policy outlook of the parties so as to accord with the demands of the newly dominant groups within the respective party coalition.

Partisan Change in the 1980s

The Reagan victories have produced their share of tantalizing hints of realignment in one form or another. The March 1981 *New York Times*/CBS News survey found the Democratic lead in party identification cut in half, down to 8 points from 16 a year earlier, with Republicans forging ahead of Democrats among self-identified conservatives (Clymer, 1981). Overall, conservatives outnumbered liberals by a 2-to-1 margin, but that had been true throughout the 1970s; so it seemed now as if partisan ties were realigning to fit voters' ideological identifications more appropriately.

During the 1984 campaign, the partisan division showed the Democratic lead narrowed to only five points (late October *Times*/CBS survey), while days after the election, in fact, the Republican share was found to be equal to the Democratic share, 32 to 32 (Clymer, 1984). Never before during the last 35 years had the GOP managed to make such strides in ousting the Democrats as the electorate's most preferred party. To be sure, a year and a half later, some of the Republican gains in party identification have evaporated. Parity with the Democrats days after the election has given way to a steady six-point gap (*Times*/CBS surveys pooled July 1985–Feb. 1986). Is this going to be a replay of what happened in the wake of Eisenhower's and Nixon's victories in 1956, 1968, and 1972, when gains reported for the GOP soon vanished (Converse, 1976:124)?

Thus far, the post-1984 gains have at least shown partial staying power. They have greatly narrowed the Democratic lead and not given way to the familiar 17-point lead enjoyed by the Democrats throughout the 1972–1980 period in NES/CPS surveys. Is this then the harbinger of a slow but ultimately full-fledged realignment? What in particular is fueling the shift toward the GOP? And where does it leave the New Deal Democratic coalition?

Collapse of the Democratic Coalition?

Studies of presidential voting for quite some time have read like obituaries for the Democratic coalition forged in the New Deal era. No

Table 1. The Democratic Coalition 1985–1986

	Percent Democratic of Identifiers	Group Size
Blacks	90%	13
Big city resident	71%	12
Poor (<$12,500)	66%	16
Union household	66%	21
Catholic	59%	28
Southerner	56%	33
Electorate	55%	—

SOURCE: Five *New York Times*/CBS News surveys conducted between July 1985 and February 1986; 8,187 respondents combined.

doubt, Democratic candidates for the presidency have not fared well among several mainline groups composing the "Democratic coalition." But, according to *Times*/CBS surveys taken between July 1985 and February 1986, not a single one of the six groups commonly counted as the components of the Democratic coalition has moved into the Republican fold. Blacks, big city residents, the poor, and union households continue to favor the Democratic party by lopsided margins, as can be gathered from Table 1. Most southerners and Catholics also still prefer the Democratic party to the GOP.

To be sure, the southern share is now close to the national norm. Southerners have fallen in line with nonsoutherners. This did not happen overnight, but through a slow process of "convergence" that has been under way for over half a century. If one extrapolates trend lines derived by Converse (1966:221) for partisan loyalties in the South and outside during the 1950s, one would have predicted 1983 as the year of convergence. Had it not been for southern blacks turning increasingly Democratic, convergence would have come earlier. Among southern whites, the once virtually unanimous support for the Democratic party has been steadily declining, from an 80-to-20 edge in 1952 to a 56-to-44 split in 1984 (NES/CPS survey, reported by Weisberg, 1985). By early 1986, the GOP had reached statistical parity with the Democratic party in this group (*Times*/CBS surveys July 1985–Feb. 1986). The Republican party, one might say, has neutralized this large Democratic support group, but so far not succeeded in drawing it into its own orbit.

Mechanisms of Partisan Change

In reflecting on how something like the party balance in the electorate shifts, one instinctively reaches for "conversion." A rise of the proportion of Republicans logically would seem to stem from individuals abandoning their Democratic identification in favor of one with the GOP. A *New Yorker* cartoon on 24 December 1984 deftly captured this process with the caption: "My God! I went to sleep a Democrat and I've awakened a Republican." Either because they are profoundly dissatisfied with the performance of Democrats in office or cannot accept key policies these Democrats "convert" to Republicanism. Such conversion, though in the opposite partisan direction, is stressed by several accounts of the 1930s realignment (Sundquist, 1973:3; Ladd and Hadley, 1978:66; Erikson and Tedin, 1981:962).

This interpretation of the 1930s realignment squares with the "revisionist" view that treats an individual's party identification as subject to revision by vote decisions, retrospective judgments, and issue orientations that challenge one's partisanship (Jackson, 1975; Fiorina, 1981; Page and Jones, 1979; Franklin and Jackson, 1983). Critical realignments simply occur on occasions when short-term forces run so massively against the majority party as to convert a large segment of the electorate to the minority party.

A rival account of partisan change, on the other hand, does not involve individuals changing their minds about anything. Instead it focuses on change in the composition of the electorate. Through births and deaths the population changes constantly. Only a small proportion of the 1930s electorate, for example, is still part of the electorate today. In fact, given the rate of "generational replacement," it is surprising how little many things in the aggregate change.

The "generational" school of thought has a well-established tradition in the treatment of partisanship (Abramson, 1975; Beck, 1974; Campbell et al., 1960; Jennings and Niemi, 1974, 1981). According to this view, the partisan balance shifts when young voters enter the electorate with an imprint that distinguishes them from the rest of society. So long as this new generation maintains that imprint as it ages and manages to impress it on its own offspring, the whole society gradually takes on the outlook of that generation. Party realignment thus proceeds gradually, with the overall balance shifting as the new generation grows up and the older cohorts die out.

Why young voters should be the vanguard of partisan change is less obvious than it might seem. Contrary to a common stereotype, the young as a whole are little concerned with politics; they do not go to the polls in large numbers and the big ideological issues do not touch them any more than the rest of society. It is not intense policization, but the lack of it, as Campbell et al. (1960:156) argue, especially the lack of firm party attachments, that makes it likely for the young to be swayed by the prevailing tides; those tides clearly favored the Democrats in the 1930s. Once the party tie is knotted time will tighten it and protect it against slippage, which is why older voters steeped in Republican loyalties were unlikely recruits for the Democratic party in the 1930s.

A third account of partisan change also does not require conversion of partisans, but focuses on that portion of the electorate which is not aligned with any party. Andersen (1979) points to the "mobilization" of heretofore nonpartisan members of the electorate into the ranks of partisanship as the key to the 1930s realignment. It was the success of the Democratic party in capturing the big bulk of "non-immunized voters—whether immigrants, new voters, or those who for some reason have abstained from voting" (Andersen, 1979:18). In our time, the heavily documented dealignment of the late 1960s and early 1970s (Nie, Verba, and Petrocik, 1976; Norpoth and Rusk, 1982; Wattenberg, 1984; Beck, 1984) creates a window of opportunity for realignment by mobilizing the unaligned.

Birth Year and Partisanship

The generational hypothesis, which requires a distinctive behavior among the young, receives considerable support. *Times*/CBS News surveys in 1984 showed the under-30 cohort to favor the GOP over the Democratic party (Clymer, 1984). "To Republicans dreaming of a historic 'realignment' in their favor, this was the best news of all in the 1984 election" (Plissner, 1985). Yet, striking a contrary note, Miller (1986) argued that it was the oldest citizens who were responsible for the overall GOP gain.

To examine more closely the prospect of generational change, Figure 1 depicts the partisanship of the American electorate grouped in 4-year birth cohorts. Approximately 8,000 cases were combined from the five *Times*/CBS surveys in late 1985 and 1986. Note that the percentage Republican among party identifiers is charted, those percentages being based on an average of 300 cases of party identifiers per cohort. This figure draws the profile of an electorate in which the Democratic party dominates all but four cohorts. Cohorts of voters born after 1906 and before 1955 consistently favor that party. The age midsection of the electorate includes the New Deal generation and much of its offspring. The heavy Republicanism of the oldest cohort (1895–1906) signals, we think, the legacy of the pre–New Deal era, in which the Republican party dominated the party system. It is astounding that the dominant

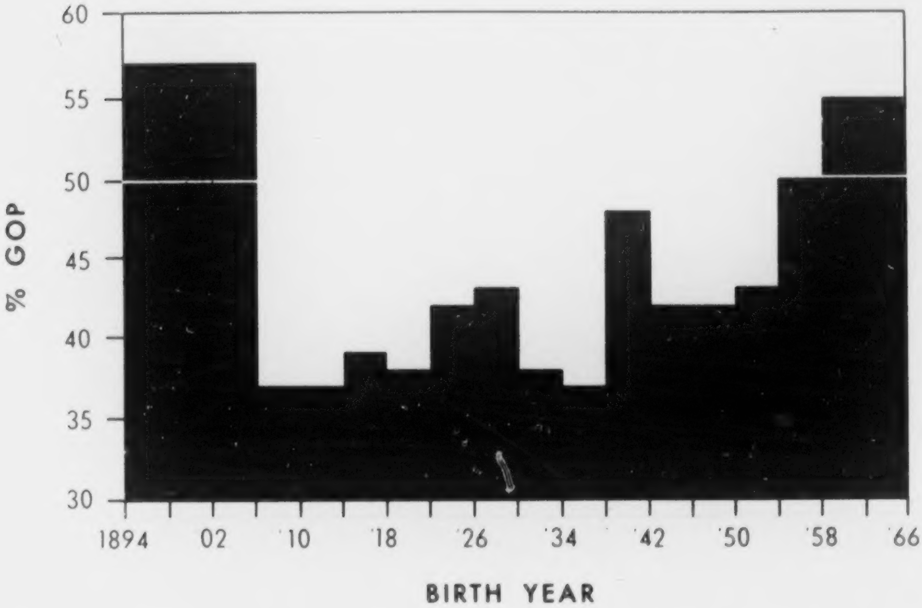

Figure 1. Percent Republican among Party Identifiers by Birth Year (July 1985–February 1986, New York Times/CBS News Surveys).

partisan flavor of this group can still be detected, more than sixty years after partisan ties must have been formed. Our finding confirms the generational fault line separating those born before 1905 and after 1910, which was discovered by *The American Voter* (Campbell et al., 1960:154).

Other than the very old, it is only the young that favor the Republican party. Those born since 1955, who were at most 30 years old in late 1985, either prefer the GOP to the Democratic party or are evenly split. On the whole, Republican support among the 30-and-under cohorts comes to 54% compared to only 42% in the rest of the electorate. *Times*/CBS surveys conducted between November 1984 and June 1985 closely replicate the "bathtub" pattern of Figure 1 (see Norpoth, 1985; Clymer, 1985); and so do results of Gallup polls charted by Ladd for 1985 (Ladd, 1986; also *Public Opinion*, 1985). Younger cohorts are rallying to the Republican party while the rest of the electorate, except for the pre–New Deal cohorts, continues to back the Democratic party.

Now perhaps this Republican surge of the young is quite typical for times when the party's candidate does well in presidential elections, the young being most easily swayed by the prevailing tides and lacking firm attachments. This suspicion can be easily dispelled. As Table 2 bears out, the under-30 group has kept its distance from the GOP in

Table 2. Percent Republican of Party Identifiers among Young Adults (Under 30 Years of Age)

Year	Republican	(*N*)
1952	29%	(214)
1956	34%	(184)
1960	35%	(74)
1964	29%	(194)
1968	35%	(139)
1972	32%	(353)
1976	31%	(316)
1980	35%	(624)
1984	49%	(1948)

SOURCE: 1952–1976, University of Michigan CPS/NES surveys (preelection); 1980, *New York Times*/CBS surveys, Aug. and Sept.; 1984, *New York Times*/CBS surveys, Aug.–Oct.

previous Republican victories. Neither 1952 and 1956 nor 1968 and 1972 showed the young with pronounced Republican leanings. The youthful surge to the GOP noticeable in 1984 stands out as a novelty.

Who Are the New Republicans?

Much has been made of the "Yuppie" generation as a group receptive to the GOP appeal and a core group of the new Republican coalition. Agewise, this group of now-grown-up baby boomers would be concentrated among the cohorts born between 1947 and 1958 in Figure 1. Yet, as Figure 1 shows, only the very youngest of them, those born between 1955 and 1958, show any drift toward the GOP. But, of course, "Yuppie" does not just mean young, but also affluent. Indeed, among those born between 1946 and 1960 with incomes over $35,000, the Republicans do outnumber Democrats 57% to 43% in the surveys examined here. The more affluent baby boomers clearly have a soft spot for the Republican party. But then, that is true for affluent voters born before 1946 as well; among them, Republicans lead Democrats 54% to 46%. Yuppie Republicanism, it seems, has more to do with affluence than with youth. For the most part, the youthful surge toward the GOP is a post-Yuppie phenomenon.

Not surprisingly, the majority of voters under 30 cast their votes for Reagan in 1984. While no higher, according to the *Times*/CBS exit poll,

Table 3. Reagan Job Rating, Ideology, and Political Trust: The Young (18–30) vs. the Rest of the Electorate

	Young	Rest of Electorate
Reagan Job Rating		
Approve	70%	61%
Disapprove	22%	27%
(*N*)	(1,934)	(4,152)
Ideology (Self-placement)		
Liberal	25%	19%
Moderate	39%	40%
Conservative	32%	35%
(*N*)	(1,945)	(4,141)
Trust in Government		
Always/most	52%	43%
Some/never	47%	54%
(*N*)	(1,009)	(2,231)

SOURCE: *New York Times*/CBS News surveys, July 1985–Feb. 1986.

than among the rest of voters, such strong support for the Republican candidate is not common for the young. Only in one other election did the under-30 group vote strongly for the Republican candidate: in 1956. It is worth noting that not Eisenhower nor Nixon nor Reagan himself in their first elections would have won office had all voted the way the young did (Gallup, 1976).

Whether voting or not, people under 30 give Ronald Reagan high marks of approval for his performance as president: 70%, according to the July 1985–February 1986 *Times*/CBS surveys, as tabulated in Table 3. Among the rest of the electorate the rating is "only" 61%. On the other hand, and surprisingly in view of ideological interpretations of partisan change, the young are not any more conservative than the general electorate; if anything, slightly more of them call themselves liberals than is true for the more Democratic rest of the electorate. On specific issues like abortion, support for affirmative action, and U.S. involvement in war, Plissner (1985) also finds the young more liberal than the rest of society.

While it is true that young conservatives profess a high loyalty toward the GOP, that holds for older conservatives as well. It is among self-described moderates under 30, on the other hand, where the GOP scores big gains compared to what it commands among older moderates. This too makes it difficult to interpret the youthful surge to the Republican party as an ideological crusade for conservatism. Reagan's appeal apparently has not fueled an ideological conversion.

On trust in government, the young come out more on the trusting side than do their elders. While greater trust has often been found among the young (Jennings and Niemi, 1974:142), political trust overall has been on the decline since the late 1960s, with signs of improvement coming late during the first Reagan term (*Times*/CBS surveys of June 1983). Among the young a revival of political trust, approval of Reagan's job performance, and Republican identification go hand in hand.

Change of Party Identification, 1976–1986

As suggestive of generational change as the youthful surge toward the GOP in the early 1980s appears to be, the evidence so far involves only snapshots, albeit several ones, taken recently. To establish more conclusively how much generational replacement, by comparison with conversion and mobilization, accounts for partisan change, we must chart partisanship over a longer period. Ideally this would require a panel, which would begin at the time of an individual's partisan socialization. Unfortunately, no such data set is at hand, and in the absence we shall improvise by charting the partisanship of several birth cohorts from the point where they entered the electorate to the present. Given the recent history of "dealignment" we have also included independents (together with DK responses) in this tabulation. It is quite true, and nothing new, that while the young may favor one party over the other they also profess independence in large numbers.

The 1963–1966 cohort is the one that as a whole came of age, politically speaking, with the 1984 election. The oldest within that group we already catch in 1982, when they turned 18. While mostly independent, the partisans favor the Republican side, as can be seen in Table 4. Moreover, the Democratic share of this cohort falls way short of the party's share among established voters while the Republicans take a bigger share. As new 18-year-olds swell this young cohort in subsequent years, the GOP edge is confirmed. As a whole, the young adults of 1984 have the markings of a GOP generation right from the start, signaling a major break with the dominantly Democratic legacy of their parents.

The next oldest cohort, comprising voters born between 1959 and 1963, came of age in the 1980 election. At that time, this cohort slightly favored the Democratic party, although nearly one-half preferred independence. The Democratic lead remains fairly constant for the next

Table 4. Party Identification by Birth Cohorts, 1976–1985

					1983		1984		1985	
	1976	1980	1981	1982	A	B	A	B	A	B
Cohort Born 1963–1966										
Rep.	—	—	—	28	31	30	30	30	34	33
Dem.	—	—	—	26	28	31	29	28	29	27
Ind./DK	—	—	—	45	40	42	42	42	37	40
(*N*)				225	268	382	532	1090	835	765
Cohort Born 1959–1962										
Rep.	—	25	26	26	24	20	26	30	31	34
Dem.	—	31	30	30	31	33	32	30	30	28
Ind./DK	—	43	45	45	44	47	41	41	39	38
(*N*)		616	606	616	420	455	671	1135	809	794
Cohort Born 1955–1958										
Rep.	16	19	26	23	24	21	25	26	29	31
Dem.	37	35	33	32	34	38	31	32	30	30
Ind./DK	47	46	40	46	42	42	43	42	41	39
(*N*)	203	754	537	647	433	474	735	1099	795	833
Cohorts Born Before 1955										
Rep.	24	23	25	23	24	23	25	26	29	28
Dem.	40	42	37	41	41	43	41	39	39	40
Ind./DK	37	35	37	36	35	34	34	34	33	31
(*N*)	2645	6066	4511	4613	3223	3262	4939	7525	5502	5311

SOURCES: For 1976, University of Michigan CPS/NES survey; for 1980–1985, 43 *New York Times*/CBS News surveys: 1983A: Jan–Jun 1983; 1983B: Jul–Dec 1983; 1984A: Jan–Jun 1984; 1984B: Aug–Oct 1984; 1985A: Dec 1984–Jun 1985; 1985B: Jul 1985–Feb 1986.

three years, but gives way in the second half of 1984. The Republican edge of this cohort is of most recent vintage (1985/86) and reflects the effect of current forces. At the same time, the starting configuration (1980) of this cohort indicates that the partisan legacy of the parental generation has not been effectively transmitted.

The next cohort (1955–1958), which came of age in 1976, begins with a partisan division that reflects the parental pattern more closely. Furthermore, its Democratic edge of 21 points approximates that found for high school seniors in 1965 by Jennings and Niemi (1974:39). Still, both parties appear to have lost ground, and equally so, among the young in

1976. In 1965, the then 18-year-olds divided 43 to 21 between the two parties, whereas by 1976 almost half of the then 18- to 21-year-olds chose independence—from parties and probably other strictures as well. During the next 10 years this cohort experiences a remarkable partisan odyssey. While setting out on a steady Democratic course, the group is diverted to the GOP in the wake of Reagan's victory over Jimmy Carter, but reverts back to Democratic bearings by late 1983 until it is swept into a virtual standoff between the two parties after the 1984 election. Admittedly, the partisan buffeting of this cohort exposes the vulnerability of partisanship among young adults.

The rest of the electorate, born before 1955, who had come of age by 1972 at the latest, meanwhile proceeds at a comparatively glacial pace through the last 10 years. The 40-to-24 Democratic edge of 1976 turns into a 40-to-28 one by 1985/86. No doubt the GOP has scored some gains, though in the aggregate exclusively at the expense of independents. There is no sign of Democratic bloodletting; no net conversion, in other words. To be sure, party identification is no immutable trait and the Reagan victories in 1980 and 1984 raise the Republican share a bit, but in the end the impression of partisanship among established voters is one of a continuing though lessening Democratic advantage. The lessening, it must be emphasized, arises entirely from Republican mobilization of independents.

Conclusions

Unlike the 1950s and late 1960s, when prophecies of Republican realignments (Phillips, 1969) remained unfulfilled, the 1980s provide more compelling clues that such a realignment is now under way. What is new is that the younger cohorts profess a marked loyalty to the GOP. No such shift was noticeable at earlier "realignment opportunities."

The youthful surge toward the GOP definitely marks a major disruption of the normal pattern of parental socialization. Young adults coming of age since 1980 have largely abandoned the predominately Democratic identification of their parents. How and why Democratic parents were unsuccessful in imparting their partisanship to their offspring, whether it was a case of mistaken partisan identities, as Converse (1975) suggests for the 1930s realignment, or whether short-term forces outside the home erased the parental imprint, these are questions that future research must address.

One thing is certain, and contrary to some common expectations: there is no evidence that conservatism fuels the youthful surge toward the GOP. Also, the Yuppie phenomenon apparently has little to do with it. Compared with older voters, the young, if anything, prove more liberal than their elders. And among the young the GOP shows the greater strength in the post-Yuppie cohorts. The surge is remarkably broad among the young, felt also somewhat among women and blacks.

There is also no evidence that the Republican party has managed to convert Democrats to any significant degree. Among voters over 30, the Democratic party has protected its share remarkably well over the past ten years. Our findings give no hope to Republican strategists, or reason for alarm among their Democratic counterparts, that Democratic conversion/defection will turn the GOP into the nation's majority party.

Where the GOP has succeeded, however, is in making inroads among the "growth" group of the late 1960s and early 1970s, the independents. This mobilization has helped narrow the partisan gap in the overall electorate, but has so far failed to reverse it. To some extent, independent mobilization may be considered commonplace and not a harbinger of realignment. Some partisan sorting out among independents typically takes place through the life cycle. If it did not, the shares of both parties would slowly erode since new entrants into the electorate generally show up with lower partisan commitments than their elders (Jennings and Niemi, 1974:39). On the other hand, the mobilization of independents might not appear so commonplace anymore. It certainly failed to materialize in the late 1960s and early 1970s. This failure in fact sharply depressed the overall level of partisanship and contributed to dealignment (Norpoth and Rusk, 1982). At a minimum, the changes of the 1980s point to the end of this contribution. Perhaps what we are seeing now is that partisans who deserted the parties then are returning to them now, though not quite evenhandedly so.

There can be no denying that the Republican surge goes hand in hand with Ronald Reagan's popularity—his initials, curiously enough, spell Republican Realignment. Among the young, where the GOP is now dominant, President Reagan enjoys peak ratings. Skeptics of the realignment scenario, of course, will pounce on this correlation as evidence of no lasting impact meriting the label "realignment." Isn't it true, after all, that the last two years in which Republicanism has flourished so much are also the years in which Reagan's job ratings have done so, staying above the 60-point mark consistently? By contrast, didn't the GOP's post-1980 gains fizzle as soon as Reagan's appeal dimmed? And does not the partisan odyssey of the 1955–1958 cohort, who came of age in 1976, bear out how fickle the young really are in their basic political attitudes?

Granted, much of the partisan change we are witnessing is inspired by Ronald Reagan's performance in office as judged by the public, perhaps in comparison to that of his Democratic predecessor. But that seems insufficient reason to dismiss changes in party identification as insignificant. Most historical realignments required a measure of performance by the leader of the newly dominant party after the nation had faced a crisis of traumatic dimensions; or at least a measure of public faith in such performance. For all we know from sketchy opinion polls of the early and mid-1930s, FDR received exceedingly high approval ratings in those years. Almost certainly, opinion surveys of that time would have shown high FDR approval rating going hand in hand with Democratic identification among the young—a partisanship that largely endured.

For Ronald Reagan to have a similar impact on the young and their Republican inclinations depends in large part on whether his performance ratings stay high long enough. The newly formed ties to the GOP among the young require reinforcement during the early adult years. But from a certain point on they acquire enough staying power to weather disappointments and survive in the absence of the conditions that inspired them. Assuming that Ronald Reagan maintains a respectable job rating for the remainder of his term that point may not be far off.[1]

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[1] Recent events seem to negate this assumption. In the wake of the Iran–Contra revelations, Ronald Reagan's approval ratings fell from 67% to 46%, according to the November 1986 *New York Times*/CBS News survey. Some will conclude that this drop spells the obituary for any GOP realignment. Almost certainly, a collapse of the Reagan presidency would prove them right. But short of such an event, a diminished approval rating by itself need not doom the realignment prospect. It must be remembered that Reagan's ratings in the two years following his landslide reelection reached heights unusual for a second-term president. An approval rating in the mid-50% range would still be considered "respectable" in the sense meant above.

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INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT AND OPINION CHANGE IN NEW ZEALAND

JAMES W. LAMARE

Abstract Conflict between groups, including nations, seemingly leads to solidarity among the people in each collectivity. Testing this proposition at the international level is difficult owing to methodological problems of data gathering. This paper reports upon the impact of an international controversy upon national opinion consolidation. After the New Zealand government banned nuclear-capable ships from the country, the United States retaliated through public denunciation of this action and mild sanctions. Poll information suggests that, as a result of this dispute, New Zealanders put aside their preexisting political and social differences on the issue of nuclear weapons in their country and rallied behind their government. Over time, however, this consolidation effect shows signs of disintegration: social and, especially, political cleavages have begun again to discriminate opinion on the question of nuclear weapons in New Zealand.

Three decades ago Coser (1956:12), drawing upon a much earlier observation by Sumner (1906:35), noted: "It seems to be generally accepted . . . that the distinction between 'ourselves, the we-group, or in-group, and everybody else, or the others-groups, out-groups,' is established in and through conflict." Studies under experimental conditions confirm that conflict stemming from sources outside a collectivity ordinarily creates solidarity among group members (Austin and Worchel, 1979; Sherif, 1962; Tajfel, 1981). Generalization of this consolidation effect to the natural setting of international controversy seems relatively straightforward, at least at the theoretical level. Systematic observation of the impact of international crisis upon domestic public opinion, however, poses significant methodological problems (Converse, 1965).

Opinion polling and the outbreak of conflictual events rarely coin-

JAMES W. LAMARE is Senior Lecturer and Head of the Department of Political Science, University of Canterbury, New Zealand.

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cide; consequently, research in this area is highly dependent upon indirect measures. It is customary in the United States, for instance, to evaluate presidential popularity when international disputes occur. The almost inevitable rise in public goodwill toward the president during these times is interpreted as an indication of collective consolidation (Benson, 1982; Lee, 1977). Interestingly, protracted unresolved disputes usually lead to an unraveling of consensus.

This paper investigates the impact of international conflict upon public opinion through the deployment of more direct tools of measurement. The case covers New Zealand, which has become embroiled in a controversy with its ANZUS (Australia, New Zealand, United States) defense treaty partners over the propriety of permitting nuclear-capable U.S. warships to berth in its harbors. The 1984 election of a Labour government committed to a ban on port calls by nuclear-powered or -armed vessels (which had previously been granted access to the country's waters) put New Zealand on a collision course with the United States. Secretary George Shultz, who was in New Zealand within days of the electoral victory of the new government, promptly announced that the United States would frown upon a shift in this policy.

The issue came to a head in February 1985 when the United States requested port access for one of its ships (the *U.S.S. Buchanan*). The Labour government would grant permission to berth only if it could be assured that the *Buchanan* was not nuclear-powered or carrying nuclear weapons. The United States refused to violate its long-standing policy of neither confirming nor denying the nuclear capability of its naval vessels. The proposed visit was canceled; military sanctions against New Zealand (including a stoppage of intelligence information and spare parts for military equipment) were invoked; and, at least in Congress, threats of economic reprisals were made. New Zealand, echoing the U.S. cry of betrayal by a friend, served notice of its intention to enact its nuclear ban into law. Some eighteen months of negotiation between the two parties failed to resolve the conflict. In August 1986 the United States officially proclaimed that New Zealand was no longer a functioning member of the ANZUS alliance, having in effect withdrawn itself from the treaty as a result of its antinuclear policy.

Public opinion toward nuclear ship visits has been monitored in New Zealand both before and after this controversy erupted.[1] These data provide a basis for analysis of change in views occasioned by the nuclear ships controversy as it unfolded over time.

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[1] The information comes from opinion polls of the New Zealand public conducted by the Heylen Research Center, the country's foremost commercial and political polling organization. Heylen employs a multistage, stratified sampling frame to select respondents. Personal interviews are conducted with the person who had the last birthday in the residence chosen in the sample draw. Each survey contains 1000 New Zealanders, aged 15 or over. Repeated callbacks insure a response rate over 85% in each poll. The sample

Findings

In 1983, a year prior to the conflict, a national sample of New Zealanders was asked: "Would you approve or disapprove of *nuclear armed* warships of New Zealand allies visiting New Zealand ports?" Forty percent of the public opposed such visits. Immediately after the change of government in July 1984 another sample was asked: "Do you approve or disapprove of the Labour Government policy to ban the entry of nuclear *weapons* into New Zealand?" Fully 76% of the respondents favored the government's ban, a support figure that reappeared in March 1987 when the same question was put to yet another national sample.

On the face of it, the government's new position (and the conflict it provoked) precipitated a major change in public sentiment—an uncommon finding in other research probing the relationship between public policy and opinion (Page and Shapiro, 1983). Conceivably, some of this opinion motility is an artifact of question wording. Antagonism toward "nuclear weapons" in general and partiality toward the "Labour Government" in particular could affect the meaning imputed to postelection questions. Other polls conducted over the same time frame, however, have solicited feelings about "nuclear armed" vessels and generally confirm the overwhelming support given to the government's ban. Armed ship visits were opposed by around 60% of a national sample polled in August 1984 (National Research Bureau, 1984) and by 72% of the residents of Auckland surveyed a month later (Crothers and Murray, 1985). Finally, a national poll conducted in May 1986 revealed that two-thirds of New Zealanders agreed with stopping port calls by "nuclear armed" ships (Defence Committee of Enquiry, 1986:70).

Assuming that opinion change is not merely a methodological fluke, what was the source of this remarkable shift in perspective? Table 1 suggests that a consolidation effect occurred in New Zealand. That is, international discord over the nuclear ships issue activated most of the public to rally around their government. Before the controversy (the 1983 column) some traditional lines of social and political cleavage

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is weighted by a household size factor in order to reduce sampling error. The weighted sample numbers 2000 and is representative of New Zealanders living in areas with 2500 or more people. This paper is based upon a detailed study of surveys administered in August 1983, August 1984, and March 1985. Heylen is gratefully acknowledged for the release of these data and assumes no responsibility for the analysis or interpretation presented.

Table 1. Changes in Opinion toward Nuclear Weapons in New Zealand: Percentages Approving Ban

	1983	1984	% Change 1983–84	1985	% Change 1984–85
Entire Sample	40%	76%	+36*	77%	+1**
(*N*)	(1,980)	(1,975)		(1,978)	
Gender					
Men	37	75	+38*	73	−2**
Women	43	78	+35*	80	+2**
Cramer's *V*	.23	.05		.13	
Age					
15–24 years	49	78	+29*	82	+4*
25–39 years	44	83	+39*	77	−6*
40–54 years	33	72	+39*	81	+9*
55-plus years	33	72	+39*	70	−2*
Cramer's *V*	.17	.08		.06	
Socioeconomic Status[a]					
High	38	77	+39*	NA	
Middle	38	72	+34*	NA	
Low	46	83	+37*	NA	
Cramer's *V*	.14	.09			
Party Choice					
Labour	53	83	+30*	92	+9*
Third party[b]	55	83	+28*	75	−8*
National	23	63	+40*	55	−8*
Cramer's *V*	.28	.15		.30	

SOURCE: Heylen Research Center.

* $p \leq .01$, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test.

** $p \leq .05$, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test.

[a] Socioeconomic status is a combined measure of income, education, occupation, and family size.

[b] For 1983, "third party" refers to Social Credit (now New Zealand Democratic), Values, and "other"; for 1984 and 1985 it includes Social Credit, Values, and the New Zealand party. In each sample some 350 respondents were excluded because they failed to choose a party.

correlated with opinion. Port calls were slightly less favored by lower-class respondents (Cramer's $V = .14$). Men were somewhat more inclined than women to welcome ship visits (Cramer's $V = .23$). Younger New Zealanders were not as disposed to the berthing of nuclear warships as their older compatriots (Cramer's $V = .17$). Most pronounced, party choice divided opinion. Labour and third-party enthusiasts were markedly more negative about nuclear ship visits than were partisans of the then ruling National government (Cramer's $V = .28$).

After the conflict broke, as indicated in the 1984 column of Table 1, ranks closed behind the Labour government's antinuclear policy. Within each stratum a large movement of opinion favorable to the ships ban was recorded. While some variation among social and political groupings remains evident, a decline in the strength of association between opinion and socioeconomic status (Cramer's $V = .09$), gender (Cramer's $V = .05$), age (Cramer's $V = .08$), and even party (Cramer's $V = .15$) had occurred. International conflict with the United States seems to have bred national solidarity in New Zealand.

Alternatively, it could be argued that the public was simply adopting signals emitted from opinion leaders. Prior research into opinion change posits a learning model of adaptation, with followers receiving and accepting ideational stimuli from leaders such as government officials (McClosky and Zaller, 1984; Page and Shapiro, 1984). It may well be that some New Zealanders—notably Labour party supporters—merely imitated nuclear opinion cues emanating from party and government leaders. However, the leadership model, standing alone, fails to account for the fissure that occurred in the National party. Whereas only 23% of National supporters took an antinuclear stand in 1983, a year later—even after a crushing electoral defeat—their approval of the ban on nuclear weapons rose to 63%. Most of the rank and file National partisans moved to the nuclear-free position of the Labour government in sharp contrast to the publicly expressed pronuclear stance of their party's leadership.

Although the evidence points to an integrative explanation of the dramatic public swing behind the government's ships ban, it would be incorrect to interpret this opinion rally solely as a symptom of either unadulterated or enduring nationalism for several reasons. First, the drift of opinion exhibits a more discerning pattern of response than an interpretation of sheer patriotism would predict. On the question of entry of nuclear-*powered* vessels into the country's ports, the public veers toward government policy, but to a significantly lesser extent than the shift and support prompted by the prospect of having nuclear *weapons* in New Zealand. Between 1980 and 1985 a steady, incremental 18% increase in opinion opposed to nuclear propelled ships was recorded: this is half the total amount of change that occurred over only twelve months (1983–1984) on the nuclear arms issue. This difference in view suggests that the consolidation effect is more conditional than crude nationalism would entail. A concern about the liability of nuclear weapons within their territorial boundaries heightened mobilization of many New Zealanders behind their government's position.

Nor does consolidation translate into blatant anti-Americanism. When the public was queried in February 1985 about the possibility of a *nonnuclear* U.S. warship making a port call, nine out of ten approved of such a stopover. To be sure, an uneasy, critical feeling toward the

United States has developed in the wake of the conflict. By March 1985, the public was evenly split (45% in each camp) in choosing between maintaining "defense ties with the U.S. or allowing ships that could be *nuclear-armed* into New Zealand ports." A slim majority (53%) said that their country had not "neglected her share of responsibility under the ANZUS agreement." The same percentage remarked that New Zealand had not been "treated fairly by U.S. officials following the ban on nuclear ships." Underscoring the magnitude of this feeling is the fact that responses to these three items cluster together, giving clear shape to a unidimensional attitude structure. Factor analysis shows loadings of .71 (break defense ties), .68 (neglect treaty obligations) and .58 (treated fairly by the United States). Accordingly, a scale of strained friendship was constructed.[2] Respondents' scale scores are directly correlated with opinion toward the government's nuclear ship stance ($D_{yx} = -0.69$). Approval of the ban flows on to a defensive, fretful (albeit not totally hostile) view of the United States; disapproval of the ban structures a favorable, sympathetic disposition toward the American position in this dispute.

Moreover, public opinion began changing as the nuclear ships controversy became prolonged. A year after the initial round of the conflict (in September 1985), for instance, New Zealanders divided evenly in their evaluation of their government's "current handling of the nuclear ships issue with the United States." (Heylen Research Center, 1985). Indeed, by March 1985—some seven months after the conflict had started—sociopolitical alignments had begun again to differentiate opinion on the ship ban.

At first glance, as indicated at the top of the 1985 column of Table 1, the public rally behind their government continued unabated: 77% still supported the prohibition of nuclear weapons. This figure, however, masks some interesting movement within discrete segments of New Zealand society. Views toward nuclear ship visits came to be slightly correlated with gender (Cramer's $V = .13$). Within age groups, some shift in sentiment also occurred. Specifically, respondents between 25 and 39 years old fell in their approval of the ban, while somewhat older (40 to 54 years of age) New Zealanders improved their support for the government's antinuclear policy. Most dramatically, party division in opinion resurfaced. The relationship (Cramer's V) between partisan-

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[2] The scale of strained friendship is a factor scale. Each respondent's score is based upon the following calculation:

$$SSF = flv_1(v_1 - \overline{X}_{v1})/SD_{v1} + flv_2(v_2 - \overline{X}_{v2})/SD_{v2} + flv_3(v_3 - \overline{X}_{v3})/SD_{v3}$$

Where: SSF is the respondent's score on the scale of strained friendship; v is the variable measured by the question; fl is the factor loading of the variable; $\overline{X}$ is the mean score of the variable; and SD is the standard deviation of the variable.

ship and nuclear view has risen from .15 in 1984 to .30 in 1985.[3] While Labour adherents *increased* their approval of the government's policy since 1984 by 9%, National and third-party partisans each *decreased* their support by 8%. Thus sustained high marks for the ban mostly reflect an accretion of goodwill for the Labour government from its natural constituents. Indeed, the fact that nine out of ten Labourites have fallen in step behind the government suggests that a ceiling in public commitment to the nuclear weapons ban may have been reached.[4]

Conclusion

The research presented here indicates that international conflict leads to national solidarity, even when the dispute is between historically friendly countries. New Zealanders generally rallied to the support of their government after it invoked a ban on port access to nuclear ships and, in so doing, upset its ANZUS treaty partner—the United States. Large segments of the New Zealand public—even traditional political opponents—pulled together immediately after the disagreement commenced. Approval of the government's action precipitated irritation with the United States over is handling of this issue. However, the consolidation effect never crystallized into abject or overt hostility toward America. Moreover, with opinion showing signs of again becoming structured along social and, especially, party lines, solidarity appears to be weakening over time.

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[3] There is no evidence to support the proposition that party realignment has been occasioned by a change of opinion on the ships issue.

[4] A 1986 poll of a representative sample of 1600 New Zealanders conducted by the National Research Bureau further documents the growing impact of party choice on views toward nuclear-armed ship visits. While most Labour supporters (84%) still stand with the government's policy, only four of every ten National supporters now approve of the ban. The relationship (Cramer's V) between opinion on ships and party preference is .32 (calculated from Defence Committee of Enquiry, 1986:71).

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THE POLLS—A Report
THE WELFARE STATE IN CROSS-NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

TOM W. SMITH

Over the last three years the Polls have examined in some detail attitudes of Americans toward the welfare state.[1] In this article we add a cross-national perspective to the analysis of attitudes toward the welfare state. The data are drawn primarily from the International Social Survey Program (ISSP) (Smith, 1986a, 1986b), as well as from the earlier Political Action study (Barnes et al., 1979; Zentralarchiv für Empirische Sozialforschung, 1979). ISSP is a continuing annual program of cross-national collaboration. It brings together preexisting national social science projects and coordinates research goals, thereby adding a cross-national perspective to the separate national studies. Topics of collaboration are selected by the group, and a draft questionnaire is designed in British English. After translation into the various national languages using standard techniques of parallel and back translation, the instrument is pretested by each participant. The final content of the annual module is then set by the group and administered by the individual survey organizations. To date, joint research has been carried out on the role of government (1985), social support (1986), and social inequity (1987). In addition to the United States, Austria, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom, which participated in the role of government questions analyzed here, Australia, the Netherlands, Ireland, and Hungary are now collaborating in ISSP. Technical details on the ISSP surveys appear in Table 1.

The Rise of the Welfare State

Over the last century all industrial nations have become welfare states. Each has adopted a broad set of social welfare programs to protect its

TOM W. SMITH is Senior Study Director at the National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago. The author would like to thank Robert Y. Shapiro for his comments on this paper.

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[1] For previous Polls articles on public attitudes toward the welfare state in the United States see Shapiro and Gillroy, 1984a, 1984b; Shapiro and Smith, 1985; Shapiro and Young, 1986; and Shapiro et al., 1987.

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Table 1. Technical Information on ISSP Role of Government Surveys

Country	Organization	Field Dates	Sample Procedure	Response Rate[a]	Sample Size	Methods	Population
USA	NORC	2–4/1985	FP	71%	677	Supplement	18+
Austria	Institute for Sociology, Graz University	5–6/1986	FP	73%	987	Supplement	16+
Germany	Zentrum für Umfragen Methoden und Analysen	Summer/1985	FP	42%	1048	Mail	18+
Italy	Eurisko	9–10/1985	PQ	n.a.	1500	Personal	18–74
UK	SCPR	4–6/1985	FP	63%	1502	Supplement	18+

NOTES: FP = full probability; PQ = probability with quotas; n.a. = not applicable.

[a] Response rate equals rate on main survey times response rate on supplement (when applicable).

citizens from such vicissitudes of life as unemployment, poverty, illness, and aging and to compensate for inequities arising from industrialization. Collectively the social welfare programs such as unemployment compensation, health care, retirement benefits, and the like are designed to provide all citizens with security and a minimum standard of living. Furthermore this protection is defined as a fundamental right of citizenship, as an entitlement owed the citizen. While all industrial nations have adopted the welfare state philosophy, they have differed significantly in how completely they have embraced the welfare state, on how extensive and how generous the protections have been. The United States in particular has been the reluctant bride of the welfare state, instituting national programs later than most countries, enacting relatively limited programs in such areas as health care and family allowances, and spending a lower share of its national income on social welfare than most European nations (Armour and Coughlin, 1985; Abrahamson et al., 1986; Mommsen, 1981). Many explanations have been offered for the discrepancies: the failure of a socialist party to successfully contend for political power in the United States, the weakness of the labor movement, the existence of a racial underclass, the (possibly) greater social mobility in the United States, and so on (Leibfried, 1978; Hewitt, 1977; Flora and Heidenheimer, 1981; Wilensky, 1975; Tomasson, 1983; Pescosolido, Boyer, and Tsui, 1985). Here we examine the relationship between the welfare state and the policy preferences and ideologies of the citizenry.

Attitudinal Differences Among Nations

The contemporary attitudes and policy preferences of the citizenry in the United States, Austria, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom match the differences that exist in the historical development and current implementation of the welfare state. America has generally been less supportive of principles underlying the welfare state and less eager to expand its scope. Leveling is not nearly as popular a goal in the United States as in the European nations. This does not seem to arise because Americans are convinced that their society is more open and thus that leveling naturally occurs across generations (see section on *Leveling*). In terms of both intergenerational opportunity and chances for women, Americans are near the middle of the five nations in their evaluations of the openness of society (see *Intergenerational Opportunity* and *Gender Opportunity*). While they show about an average willingness to take steps to equalize conditions for women, they show by far the lowest level of support for reducing differences between classes.

Americans are likewise the least inclined to favor various governmental programs to regulate the economy (see *Economic Regulations*). In terms of wage/price controls, employment creation schemes, governmental ownership, and other economic matters the United States routinely shows the lowest level of support. In contrast, the Italians are generally the most enthusiastic for such regulations. For example, while 51% of Americans favor government programs "supporting declining industries to protect jobs," such programs are endorsed by 76% of Italians.

Americans are also less supportive of such social welfare entitlements as health care, retirement benefits, housing, and jobs (see *Welfare Programs*). As with regulations, Americans are lowest in support, while Italians are generally at the top of the scale. This reticence about expanding the welfare state does not seem rooted in concerns about taxes and government spending (see *Government Spending and Taxes*) since the United States and the European nations differ little in their attitudes toward taxes (about two-thirds of everybody thinks income taxes are too high) and the United States is actually most likely to consider business taxes too low. Social welfare spending (for health, retirement, and unemployment) is somewhat less supported in the United States than in Italy or the UK, but differs little from Austria and Germany. The difference here may be that all European countries actually spend proportionally more than the United States, but at least Americans are no more opposed to their relative burden than Europeans, and their perceived burden does not readily explain their lower support for welfare programs.

A hint of the underlying differences comes from inspection of attitudes on education (see *Education*). Americans are at the top of the list in their support for more educational opportunity and near the middle in their support for educational spending and assistance. Compared to their low support for other entitlement programs, their support for education is *relatively* strong. However, what they really warm to is not the specific programs to assist education but the ideal of expanded opportunity (see *Government Spending and Taxes* and *Education*). As Wilensky (1975) has noted, education is associated with equality of opportunity, in contrast to most other welfare programs, which are related to absolute equality.

As Coughlin (1980) has noted, there seems to be a consistent ordering of nations on their current level of welfare efforts and the public support for such efforts.[2] Americans have a less elaborated welfare system because they want and demand less, while Europeans have more because they want more. While a complex array of historical and structural factors explain why the current differences have evolved, one factor seems to be differences in ideological paradigms. The United States is an opportunity society where a chance to achieve entails a tolerance of some inequality as a natural repercussion of such an open system. In sharpest contrast, Italy is a security society that wants extensive protection from inequities and hardships. The other European nations tend to fall between the Italian and American poles, although closer to the Italian side than the American. While industrialization leads to the establishment of the welfare state in response to inequities and sufferings, the extent and nature of the welfare state varies across advanced nations, and this variation in programs mirrors differences in public policy preferences and underlying public ideologies of opportunity, equality, and government action.

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[2] The ranking by percentage of gross domestic product spent on social welfare in 1977 was Germany (23.4%), Italy (22.8%), Austria (21.1%), United Kingdom (17.3%), and the United States (13.7%) (Armour and Coughlin, 1985:780).

Except as noted, data in this article are from ISSP. (For some questions, data for Austria are not available.) A merged tape is being prepared by the Zentralarchiv für Empirische Sozialforschung, University of Cologne, Federal Republic of Germany. Individual national data sets have been released by each participating organization. For further details contact the ISSP secretariat, Roger Jowell, SCPR, 35 Northampton Square, London, ECIV OAX England.

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Leveling

Some people think those with high incomes should pay a larger proportion (percentage) of their earnings in taxes than those who earn low incomes. Other people think that those with high incomes and those with low incomes should pay the same proportion (percentage) of their earnings in taxes.

Do you think those with high incomes should pay a much larger proportion, pay a larger proportion, pay the same proportion as those who earn low incomes, pay a smaller proportion, pay a much smaller proportion?

	USA	*Germany*	*Italy*	*UK*
Much larger	17.0	37.5	32.2	23.7
Larger	39.7	51.0	50.2	50.7
Same	37.7	10.0	13.3	22.1
Smaller	0.8	0.0	0.5	0.8
Much smaller	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.1
Can't choose	4.7	1.4	3.6	2.6

What is your opinion of the following statement?
It is the responsibility of the government to reduce the difference in income between people with high incomes and those with low incomes.

	USA	*Austria*	*Germany*	*Italy*	*UK*
Agree strongly	13.4	36.7	29.5	32.4	22.2
Agree	18.1	29.6	26.9	36.3	29.6
Neither agree nor disagree	20.7	21.4	23.5	17.5	24.6
Disagree	31.3	7.3	10.0	11.8	17.6
Disagree strongly	16.5	4.9	10.1	2.0	6.0

On the whole do you think it should or should not be the government's responsibility to . . .
Reduce income differences between the rich and poor.

	USA	*Austria*	*Germany*	*Italy*	*UK*
Definitely should be	15.3	37.8	25.9	46.0	45.5
Probably should be	20.6	33.8	37.1	35.1	24.6
Probably should not be	25.0	15.0	23.6	9.2	13.7
Definitely should not be	29.2	5.2	6.9	5.4	10.2
Can't choose	9.9	8.2	6.6	4.3	6.0

Now we would like to know how you feel about some of the particular issues and problems that people often talk about these days. We would like to know (a) how important these issues and problems are in your view, (b) how far you feel the government has responsibility for them, and (c) how well the government is handling these problems. . . .

Tell me how much responsibility you think the government has for dealing with the problem. Is it something that you feel is (1) essential for government to do, (2) something that government has an important responsibility to do, (3) some responsibility to do, or (4) no responsibility at all to do?

Trying to even out differences in wealth between people.

	USA	*AU*	*FRG*	*IT*	*UK*	*NL*	*SW*	*FIN*
Essential responsibility	13.0	25.9	29.4	39.7	25.4	38.4	31.7	25.9
Important responsibility	18.7	41.6	41.6	32.1	26.5	43.2	43.3	32.1
Some responsibility	32.3	28.3	23.9	20.3	32.9	14.6	20.3	26.3
No responsibility at all	36.0	4.1	5.2	8.0	15.2	3.8	4.7	15.5

SOURCE: Zentralarchiv für Empirische Sozialforschung, 1979.
NOTES: USA = United States, AU = Austria, FRG = Germany, IT = Italy, UK = United Kingdom, NL = The Netherlands, SW = Switzerland, FIN = Finland.

Intergenerational Opportunity

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

A person whose parents are rich has a better chance of earning a lot of money than a person whose parents are poor.

	USA	*Austria*	*Germany*	*Italy*	*UK*
Agree strongly	29.6	41.0	23.2	36.2	28.8
Agree	37.3	32.5	46.5	35.6	43.3
Neither agree nor disagree	12.4	14.3	17.7	13.1	12.8
Disagree	17.3	9.2	9.8	11.3	13.2
Disagree strongly	3.4	2.9	2.8	3.8	1.9

A person whose father is a professional has a much better chance of getting ahead in life than a person whose father is a factory worker.

	USA	*Austria*	*Germany*	*Italy*	*UK*
Agree strongly	19.0	39.7	18.3	33.9	22.3
Agree	32.5	33.9	45.1	36.7	46.0
Neither agree nor disagree	19.1	12.9	18.6	12.7	16.3
Disagree	24.9	10.8	14.2	12.2	13.5
Disagree strongly	4.4	2.8	3.7	4.5	1.8

In America what you achieve in life depends largely on your family background.

	USA	*Austria*	*Germany*	*Italy*	*UK*
Agree strongly	10.6	21.5	7.8	22.2	16.5
Agree	19.9	29.8	27.1	40.9	35.6
Neither agree nor disagree	20.2	27.0	29.4	21.3	17.5
Disagree	40.9	18.5	28.3	13.0	26.2
Disagree strongly	8.3	3.2	7.4	2.7	4.1

Gender Opportunity

Would you say that opportunities for a college education are, in general, better or worse for women than for men?

	USA	*Germany*	*Italy*	*UK*
Much better	1.8	0.8	0.7	1.3
Better	6.8	1.5	4.0	2.1
No difference	75.3	72.0	81.4	68.9
Worse	10.5	17.6	8.1	15.0
Much worse	0.8	1.6	1.2	1.5
Can't choose	4.8	6.5	4.5	11.2

How about job opportunities for women—do you think they are, in general, better or worse than job opportunities for men with similar education and experience?

	USA	*Germany*	*Italy*	*UK*
Much better	3.0	0.4	1.0	1.8
Better	7.1	0.7	6.4	4.8
No difference	31.7	11.5	47.3	37.3
Worse	49.2	57.6	40.0	47.2
Much worse	4.2	27.3	2.2	4.6
Can't choose	4.8	2.6	3.2	4.3

And how about income and wages—compared with men who have similar education and jobs, are women in general paid better or worse than men?

	USA	*Austria*	*Germany*	*Italy*	*UK*
Much better	0.9	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.5
Better	1.5	0.5	0.6	1.6	1.7
No difference	19.7	11.0	11.3	70.6	30.6
Worse	64.6	60.6	61.9	22.2	55.9
Much worse	7.6	20.2	20.4	1.0	4.8
Can't choose	5.7	7.6	5.8	4.5	6.4

Here are three things the government might do. Some people are in favor of them while other people are against them. Please circle one number for each statement to show how you feel.

The government should increase opportunities for women in business and industry.

	USA	*Austria*	*Germany*	*Italy*	*UK*
Strongly in favor of	18.1	38.6	39.6	14.7	16.4
In favor of	30.8	35.9	32.5	37.1	39.9
Neither in favor nor against	34.8	20.6	23.2	31.4	33.3
Against	13.5	4.1	3.4	14.1	8.9
Strongly against	2.8	0.7	1.3	2.7	1.5

The government should increase opportunities for women to go to college.

	USA	*Austria*	*Germany*	*Italy*	*UK*
Strongly in favor of	13.9	22.3	22.3	9.6	11.4
In favor of	30.5	25.9	20.2	28.0	33.6
Neither in favor nor against	38.6	42.3	48.0	48.9	45.9
Against	14.8	6.6	6.6	11.0	7.9
Strongly against	2.2	2.9	2.9	2.5	1.2

Women should be given preferential treatment when applying for jobs or promotions.

	USA	*Austria*	*Germany*	*Italy*	*UK*
Strongly in favor of	5.7	7.1	3.0	4.8	2.9
In favor of	7.9	12.8	7.5	15.6	4.5
Neither in favor nor against	27.9	46.7	47.7	35.2	27.6
Against	42.5	22.7	23.0	33.1	46.4
Strongly against	15.9	10.8	18.8	11.3	18.5

Economic Regulations

Do you think that . . .

All employees should be required to retire at an age set by law.

	USA	*Austria*	*Germany*	*Italy*	*UK*
Agree strongly	4.8	27.9	11.2	44.1	19.7
Agree	12.8	29.8	31.8	34.3	35.1
Neither agree nor disagree	17.3	20.8	20.9	12.7	17.7
Disagree	44.3	17.2	28.7	7.7	23.3
Disagree strongly	20.8	4.3	7.3	1.2	4.2

Here are some things that government might do for the economy. Circle one number for each action to show whether you are in favor of it or against it.

Control of wages by legislation.

	USA	*Austria*	*Germany*	*Italy*	*UK*
Strongly in favor of	8.5	26.3	10.5	31.2	10.3
In favor of	14.3	31.9	17.1	41.7	22.2
Neither in favor nor against	22.9	22.5	20.3	14.6	21.2
Against	38.4	12.1	21.6	10.9	36.0
Strongly against	15.9	7.2	30.6	1.6	10.3

Control of prices by legislation.

	USA	*Austria*	*Germany*	*Italy*	*UK*
Strongly in favor of	8.1	56.0	28.0	53.7	20.5
In favor of	29.5	30.6	27.5	37.1	39.7
Neither in favor nor against	21.7	7.4	9.5	5.0	15.8
Against	30.4	4.1	17.1	3.7	20.0
Strongly against	10.3	2.0	17.9	0.5	4.0

Cuts in government spending.

	USA	*Austria*	*Germany*	*Italy*	*UK*
Strongly in favor of	40.8	53.1	39.8	34.5	11.1
In favor of	39.5	28.5	36.8	33.5	27.0
Neither in favor nor against	11.5	14.2	15.3	20.3	24.4
Against	6.6	3.2	5.5	10.5	28.9
Strongly against	1.5	0,9	2.5	1.1	8.6

Government financing of projects to create new jobs.

	USA	*Austria*	*Germany*	*Italy*	*UK*
Strongly in favor of	27.9	28.3	30.2	55.6	37.4
In favor of	41.5	43.6	41.2	35.7	50.2
Neither in favor nor against	15.9	22.3	15.2	6.3	7.9
Against	11.2	4.4	8.8	2.0	3.7
Strongly against	3.5	1.5	4.6	0.4	0.8

Less government regulation of business.

	USA	*Austria*	*Germany*	*Italy*	*UK*
Strongly in favor of	15.0	17.6	13.5	11.9	13.1
In favor of	33.6	28.9	27.7	29.6	41.5
Neither in favor nor against	32.3	37.3	31.7	38.1	34.0
Against	15.9	12.9	18.7	17.5	9.5
Strongly against	3.2	3.2	8.3	2.9	1.9

Support for industry to develop new products and technology.

	USA	*Austria*	*Germany*	*Italy*	*UK*
Strongly in favor of	21.7	29.9	31.0	26.6	37.4
In favor of	48.4	36.2	44.3	47.7	53.3
Neither in favor nor against	19.6	26.0	17.5	18.0	7.4
Against	8.6	6.3	4.9	6.7	1.6
Strongly against	1.6	1.6	2.3	1.0	0.3

Supporting declining industries to protect jobs.

	USA	*Austria*	*Germany*	*Italy*	*UK*
Strongly in favor of	17.2	18.9	24.5	35.3	18.8
In favor of	34.1	27.4	33.4	41.1	30.9
Neither in favor nor against	23.9	23.4	14.3	12.5	21.2
Against	20.0	20.3	16.5	9.6	25.3
Strongly against	4.9	10.0	11.2	1.6	3.8

Reducing the work week to create more jobs.

	USA	*Austria*	*Germany*	*Italy*	*UK*
Strongly in favor of	5.6	13.8	21.7	27.5	15.7
In favor of	20.3	22.0	28.8	36.9	34.1
Neither in favor nor against	27.5	22.1	19.8	19.9	22.8
Against	34.2	25.5	15.6	12.9	23.6
Strongly against	12.4	16.7	14.1	2.8	3.8

On the whole, do you think it should or should not be the government's responsibility to . . .

Keep prices under control.

	USA	*Austria*	*Germany*	*Italy*	*UK*
Definitely should be	30.3	48.2	24.7	75.0	60.1
Probably should be	44.7	41.9	49.6	22.0	31.5
Probably should not be	14.5	5.1	19.0	1.5	5.1
Definitely should not be	7.8	1.2	4.8	0.4	1.8
Can't choose	2.9	3.6	1.8	1.0	1.5

Provide industry with the help it needs to grow.

	USA	*Austria*	*Germany*	*Italy*	*UK*
Definitely should be	15.6	21.9	10.6	33.1	53.0
Probably should be	42.6	45.4	40.1	47.7	40.1
Probably should not be	23.8	19.6	37.7	12.6	3.5
Definitely should not be	10.8	3.4	6.4	2.7	0.9
Can't choose	7.1	9.6	5.2	4.0	2.5

What do you think the government's role in each of these industries should be.

Electric power.

	USA	*Austria*	*Germany*	*Italy*	*UK*
Own it	5.6	21.1	18.3	32.3	25.3
Control prices and profits but not own it	58.9	53.3	60.3	54.1	42.8
Neither own it nor control its prices and profits	30.0	8.2	16.4	3.6	25.4
Can't choose	5.6	17.5	5.0	9.9	6.5

Local mass transportation.

	USA	*Austria*	*Germany*	*Italy*	*UK*
Own it	9.6	26.2	23.3	29.0	17.7
Control prices and profits but not own it	43.0	42.7	52.7	56.6	36.6
Neither own it nor control its prices and profits	38.9	11.4	17.6	4.6	39.4
Can't choose	8.4	19.8	6.4	9.9	6.3

The steel industry.

	USA	*Austria*	*Germany*	*Italy*	*UK*
Own it	2.5	19.2	8.0	18.4	16.4
Control prices and profits but not own it	32.0	38.5	42.0	53.6	30.3
Neither own it nor control its prices and profits	55.8	18.2	40.4	8.9	41.9
Can't choose	9.7	24.0	9.6	19.1	11.4

Banking and insurance.

	USA	*Austria*	*Germany*	*Italy*	*UK*
Own it	2.6	12.7	4.8	21.3	8.4
Control prices and profits but not own it	44.4	44.5	51.3	56.4	31.5
Neither own it nor control its prices and profits	44.1	22.0	36.8	9.1	49.0
Can't choose	8.9	20.7	7.1	13.1	11.0

The automobile industry.

	USA	*Austria*	*Germany*	*Italy*	*UK*
Own it	2.2	6.6	2.2	13.0	8.0
Control prices and profits but not own it	33.3	35.2	38.6	58.6	29.0
Neither own it nor control its prices and profits	56.4	31.8	51.9	13.8	53.2
Can't choose	8.0	26.3	7.3	14.6	9.8

Welfare Programs

On the whole, do you think it should or should not be the government's responsibility to . . .

Provide a job for everyone who wants one.

	USA	*Austria*	*Germany*	*Italy*	*UK*
Definitely should be	12.9	44.7	34.9	51.2	36.7
Probably should be	20.3	35.9	45.2	37.2	32.4
Probably should not be	33.3	12.4	15.4	7.1	16.1
Definitely should not be	28.0	2.6	2.8	3.0	10.8
Can't choose	5.6	4.5	1.6	1.6	4.1

Provide health care for the sick.

	USA	*Austria*	*Germany*	*Italy*	*UK*
Definitely should be	35.5	64.3	53.4	86.0	85.6
Probably should be	46.3	31.7	43.6	12.9	13.2
Probably should not be	11.9	1.3	2.1	0.1	0.6
Definitely should not be	4.4	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
Can't choose	2.0	2.3	0.6	0.7	0.3

Provide a decent standard of living for the old.

	USA	*Austria*	*Germany*	*Italy*	*UK*
Definitely should be	41.9	63.5	55.4	81.0	78.2
Probably should be	44.9	33.8	40.5	17.4	19.6
Probably should not be	9.1	1.3	2.9	0.4	1.1
Definitely should not be	2.4	0.1	0.4	0.1	0.5
Can't choose	1.7	1.3	0.8	1.0	0.6

Provide a decent standard of living for the unemployed.

	USA	*Austria*	*Germany*	*Italy*	*UK*
Definitely should be	14.7	16.2	23.2	38.7	42.8
Probably should be	33.0	46.5	59.7	43.6	39.0
Probably should not be	30.2	18.8	11.2	10.3	10.3
Definitely should not be	15.2	10.1	3.0	4.2	3.7
Can't choose	6.8	8.4	2.9	3.2	4.2

If the government *had* to choose between keeping down inflation or keeping down unemployment to which do you think it should give highest priority?

	USA	*Austria*	*Germany*	*Italy*	*UK*
Keeping inflation down	39.2	23.8	33.0	28.0	28.3
Keeping unemployment down	44.5	53.5	50.9	63.5	63.5
Can't choose	16.3	22.7	16.1	8.6	8.2

Now we would like to know how you feel about some of the particular issues and problems that people often talk about these days. We would like to know

(a) how important these issues and problems are in your view, (b) how far you feel the government has responsibility for them, and (c) how well the government is handling these problems. . . .

Tell me how much responsibility you think government has for dealing with the problem. Is it something that you feel is (1) essential for government to do, (2) something that government has an important responsibility to do, (3) some responsibility to do, or (4) no responsibility at all to do?

Looking after old people.

	USA	*AU*	*FRG*	*IT*	*UK*	*NL*	*SW*	*FIN*
Essential responsibility	41.1	43.5	51.0	69.2	57.7	43.1	38.9	47.6
Important responsibility	40.3	45.1	42.4	22.8	30.5	50.3	50.5	48.4
Some responsibility	17.8	11.1	6.2	7.6	11.1	6.0	10.2	3.7
No responsibility at all	0.8	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.3	0.2

Seeing to it that everyone who wants a job can have one.

	USA	*AU*	*FRG*	*IT*	*UK*	*NL*	*SW*	*FIN*
Essential responsibility	34.2	59.0	60.0	78.9	54.6	49.1	49.2	57.7
Important responsibility	37.4	35.2	33.5	14.9	30.8	41.1	39.9	36.1
Some responsibility	24.0	5.2	6.1	5.4	13.1	7.7	10.0	5.2
No responsibiltiy at all	4.4	0.6	0.4	0.8	1.5	2.1	0.9	1.0

Providing good medical care.

	USA	*AU*	*FRG*	*IT*	*UK*	*NL*	*SW*	*FIN*
Essential responsibility	41.9	62.2	62.7	79.3	73.5	55.1	47.5	54.5
Important responsibility	35.6	31.7	31.5	16.3	21.1	38.2	38.1	40.1
Some responsibility	19.6	6.0	5.5	3.9	5.0	6.2	13.0	5.1
No responsibility at all	2.9	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.5	1.4	0.3

Providing adequate housing.

	USA	*AU*	*FRG*	*IT*	*UK*	*NL*	*SW*	*FIN*
Essential responsibility	25.4	36.7	39.1	69.3	60.6	52.4	27.4	30.1
Important responsibility	37.5	44.2	45.5	22.4	27.0	41.4	43.1	47.3
Some responsibility	32.3	18.4	14.1	7.3	11.6	5.8	26.2	19.9
No responsibility at all	4.9	0.7	1.3	1.0	0.8	0.4	3.3	2.7

SOURCE: Zentralarchiv für Empirische Sozialforschung, 1979.

Government Spending and Taxes

Listed below are various areas of government spending. Please indicate whether you would like to see more or less government spending in each area.

Remember that if you say "much more," it might require a tax increase to pay for it.

The environment.

	USA	*Austria*	*Germany*	*Italy*	*UK*
Spend much more	9.7	32.2	42.5	16.4	6.3
Spend more	31.7	36.8	38.6	42.0	29.1
Spend the same as now	42.8	23.2	15.6	29.4	54.1
Spend less	9.6	1.9	1.2	6.6	4.5
Spend much less	1.7	0.4	0.3	1.0	0.6
Can't choose	4.4	5.3	1.8	4.7	5.4

Health.

	USA	*Austria*	*Germany*	*Italy*	*UK*
Spend much more	12.6	21.5	18.8	32.6	35.6
Spend more	46.0	37.1	32.6	46.8	52.2
Spend the same as now	33.0	36.5	39.9	13.5	10.8
Spend less	5.2	1.4	6.5	4.3	0.5
Spend much less	1.7	0.4	0.6	1.1	0.3
Can't choose	1.7	3.1	1.6	1.7	0.7

The police and law enforcement.

	USA	*Austria*	*Germany*	*Italy*	*UK*
Spend much more	9.6	4.2	8.6	11.0	8.4
Spend more	40.2	16.7	20.4	35.0	30.4
Spend the same as now	42.6	56.3	59.7	39.6	53.3
Spend less	4.3	12.7	7.1	7.9	4.3
Spend much less	0.8	2.7	1.2	1.9	1.8
Can't choose	2.4	7.4	3.0	4.5	1.8

Education.

	USA	*Austria*	*Germany*	*Italy*	*UK*
Spend much more	21.4	8.4	9.4	16.0	22.2
Spend more	43.3	25.9	30.0	44.5	51.6
Spend the same as now	29.1	52.0	52.0	31.7	22.9
Spend less	3.5	7.4	5.9	3.9	1.8
Spend much less	0.6	0.8	1.0	0.3	0.2
Can't choose	2.1	5.4	1.7	3.6	1.3

The military and defense.

	USA	*Austria*	*Germany*	*Italy*	*UK*
Spend much more	7.7	2.8	1.5	2.9	5.0
Spend more	11.8	9.5	4.4	8.4	12.1
Spend the same as now	36.9	36.7	30.0	30.9	43.8
Spend less	26.0	25.9	31.8	27.8	24.5
Spend much less	14.0	17.8	29.9	25.4	12.5
Can't choose	3.7	7.3	2.4	4.6	2.1

Retirement benefits.

	USA	*Austria*	*Germany*	*Italy*	*UK*
Spend much more	12.3	12.1	10.4	22.3	25.3
Spend more	29.3	36.7	35.3	51.9	49.3
Spend the same as now	41.0	45.6	48.9	19.8	23.5
Spend less	10.2	1.4	3.3	3.1	1.0
Spend much less	2.7	0.4	0.6	0.6	0.1
Can't choose	4.3	3.8	1.5	2.3	1.0

Unemployment benefits.

	USA	*Austria*	*Germany*	*Italy*	*UK*
Spend much more	7.2	3.0	7.6	15.3	12.0
Spend more	17.0	11.2	26.0	39.2	28.2
Spend the same as now	48.9	41.2	50.5	24.7	38.7
Spend less	16.6	28.9	10.2	9.8	14.5
Spend much less	6.7	9.7	2.6	6.6	4.1
Can't choose	3.8	5.9	3.0	4.3	2.4

Culture and the arts.

	USA	*Austria*	*Germany*	*Italy*	*UK*
Spend much more	3.7	2.3	2.0	6.8	1.2
Spend more	10.8	8.3	11.0	24.6	8.0
Spend the same as now	39.2	41.1	48.8	45.7	35.3
Spend less	23.7	27.6	24.1	10.8	30.8
Spend much less	14.8	12.3	9.5	5.9	20.2
Can't choose	7.8	8.3	4.5	6.2	4.5

Do you consider the amount of federal income tax that your household has to pay is . . .

	USA	*Austria*	*Germany*	*Italy*	*UK*
Much too high	22.9	21.3	16.4	29.7	20.6
Too high	37.3	44.7	41.5	39.3	35.1
About right	29.9	19.8	26.8	25.9	25.4
Too low	0.5	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.5
Much too low	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.2
Pay no tax	5.8	7.2	11.2	3.2	15.3
Can't choose	3.6	6.3	3.8	1.5	2.9

Do you consider the amount of tax that business and industry have to pay is too high or too low?

	USA	*Austria*	*Germany*	*Italy*	*UK*
Much too high	4.7	12.0	2.1	21.8	9.3
Too high	12.2	27.6	15.6	29.0	30.4
About right	29.4	19.8	68.2	18.0	30.8
Too low	33.0	2.6	12.3	8.9	5.6
Much too low	9.2	0.5	1.7	3.9	1.3
Can't choose	11.5	37.5	0.0	18.5	22.6

Education

How do you feel about opportunities for young people to go to college. Should opportunities be . . .

	USA	*Austria*	*Germany*	*Italy*	*UK*
Increased a lot	44.3	5.5	9.8	8.5	29.3
Increased a little	25.1	13.7	21.2	30.2	26.0
Kept the same as now	23.9	47.2	43.8	37.6	34.6
Reduced a little	3.5	18.5	16.0	15.4	4.1
Reduced a lot	0.8	1.3	2.4	2.6	1.0
Can't choose	2.7	13.7	6.8	5.5	4.9

Some people think the government should provide financial assistance to college students. Others think the government should not provide such aid. In each of the circumstances listed below should the government provide grants that would *not* have to be paid back, provide loans which the student *would* have to pay back, or should the government not provide any financial assistance?

For students whose parents have a low income.

	USA	*Germany*	*Italy*	*UK*
Government grants	42.7	51.8	76.9	81.4
Government loans	52.0	45.1	17.6	16.3
No government assistance	4.5	1.3	3.3	0.9
Can't choose	0.8	1.8	2.2	1.4

For students who have outstanding grades in high school.

	USA	*Germany*	*Italy*	*UK*
Government grants	35.1	42.3	63.3	66.0
Government loans	53.3	51.4	21.0	27.2
No government assistance	9.5	2.2	10.9	2.4
Can't choose	2.1	4.0	4.8	4.5

For students who have average grades and middle income parents.

	USA	*Germany*	*Italy*	*UK*
Government grants	14.4	10.3	23.2	42.5
Government loans	66.1	69.5	35.8	44.6
No government assistance	16.3	15.9	33.4	7.1
Can't choose	3.1	4.3	7.6	5.8

Now we would like to know how you feel about some of the particular issues and problems that people often talk about these days. We would like to know (a) how important these issues and problems are in your view, (b) how far you feel the government has responsibility for them, and (c) how well the government is handling these problems. . . .

Tell me how much responsibility you think government has for dealing with the problem. Is it something that you feel is (1) essential for government to do, (2) something that government has an important responsibility to do, (3) some responsibility to do, or (4) no responsibility at all to do?

Providing good education.

	USA	*AU*	*FRG*	*IT*	*UK*	*NL*	*SW*	*FIN*
Essential responsibility	47.3	48.0	55.2	66.4	68.4	64.4	46.6	39.7
Important responsibility	35.7	41.6	37.6	26.7	24.0	33.9	42.3	48.1
Some responsibility	14.4	9.9	6.9	6.0	7.2	1.5	10.0	11.3
No responsibility at all	2.5	0.5	0.3	0.9	0.4	0.2	1.1	0.9

SOURCE: Zentralarchiv für Empirische Sozialforschung, 1979.

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NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

Prospective contributors should refer to the detailed Notice to Contributors that appears in the Summer 1987 issue of POQ.

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THE GROWTH OF THE FEDERAL DEFICIT AND THE ROLE OF PUBLIC ATTITUDES

ANDRE MODIGLIANI AND
FRANCO MODIGLIANI

Abstract How can the recent explosion in the fiscal deficit of the United States be reconciled with the well-known support of the American public for fiscal conservatism? It is first shown that the reputation for fiscal conservatism is fully supported by public opinion polls dating back over a period of four decades. Solid majorities have consistently opposed tax reductions that might produce an unbalanced budget. Recently, however, the public has also shown strong opposition to increases in taxes to close the fiscal gap, which might appear to imply a new acquiescence to the deficit. But this opposition, too, is shown to have persisted for a long time and to be not logically inconsistent with rejecting tax cuts resulting in deficit. Another fashionable explanation for the deficit holds that the budget process in a democratic society is biased toward deficit because the cost of higher taxes is immediate while the cost of deficit is delayed. But it is inconsistent with the fiscal history of the United States over the last 100 years, which reveals no systematic bias toward deficits, at least until recent years. The major explanation that emerges is that the administration succeeded in misleading the public (and perhaps even itself) into believing that the tax cut would not result in deficit thanks to "supply" and "Laffer curve" effects.

The Issues

Since President Reagan's phased tax-reduction program first began to take effect in 1982, the United States has been incurring federal deficits approaching 5% of the gross national product. It is widely recognized that this wholesale abandonment of orthodox balanced budget policies is building up to one of the most serious economic issues facing the

ANDRE MODIGLIANI is Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Michigan. FRANCO MODIGLIANI is Institute Professor and Professor of Economics and Finance at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

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United States. When receipts do not cover current expenditures and the government is forced to tap private saving to make up the difference, the bill is passed on to future generations who will enjoy a smaller after-tax income because of the taxes they will have to pay to service the debt or, equivalently, because of the smaller stock of capital at their disposal. In addition, the deficit has immediate adverse effects by raising interest rates, thereby also causing an appreciation of the exchange rate, which in turn results in a foreign trade deficit.

Actually, the deficits seem to antedate Reagan. According to official statistics, the budget has been in the red every single year since 1970, and in 11 of these 17 years it has exceeded 2% of GNP. This phenomenon is a very surprising one, considering that the American public has long been reputed to be very conservative in fiscal matters and might be expected to elect like-minded representatives (Cantril and Free, 1968; Gallup, 1978:75).

There are two issues that seem worth investigating. First, how well-founded is the public's reputation for fiscal conservatism in the light of evidence provided by public opinion polls. Second, if it is confirmed, then how could such a reckless fiscal policy come into existence and be so passively tolerated for so long.

Evidence of Public Opposition to Deficits

With respect to the issue of fiscal conservatism, one of the striking episodes supporting this proposition goes back to the early presidency of John Kennedy, some 25 years ago. It was during the economic showdown of 1962 that Kennedy, despite some current deficit, proposed a reduction of taxes to stimulate the economy and help restore full employment (Kennedy, 1962). Congressional reaction was far from enthusiastic and, in the end, the president was unable to get his proposal through Congress. It was widely held that this performance reflected the opposition of the public. This is confirmed by the result of a Gallup poll conducted in June 1962. Confronted with the question "Would you favor or oppose a cut in federal income taxes at this time, if a cut meant the government would go further into debt?" fully 72% of those polled were opposed, with only 19% in favor (Gallup, 1972 [Q13][1]).[2]

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[1] All opinion items referred to in the text are listed in the Appendix in chronological order, numbered Q1 to Q28. Both exact wording and marginal distribution are shown.

[2] The lopsided opposition to tax cuts seen here is not found on items phrased so as to omit any suggestion that a tax reduction might further unbalance the budget. In September 1963, for example, when Gallup asked simply, "Do you favor or oppose a cut in income taxes now?" 60% indicated they were in favor (Gallup, 1972 [Q16]). Similarly

But the evidence of opposition to tax cuts financed by deficit is by no means limited to the Kennedy episode, as can be inferred from the reply to questions similar to the above which were posed on several occasions prior to 1962. Thus, in August 1946, in connection with the winding down of the war effort, respondents were asked "Which do you think is more important to do in the coming year—balance the budget or cut income taxes?" Seventy-one percent thought it was more important to balance the budget, with only 20% giving priority to the tax cut (Gallup, 1972 [Q1]). The issue was posed again in a pair of 1953 surveys. In the first (January), respondents were asked "If the new Congress finds that it cannot balance the budget for this year and at the same time reduce income taxes, which do you think it should try to do first?" Again, 67% wanted the budget to be balanced first, with only 26% giving priority to a tax cut (Gallup, 1972 [Q8]). In the second survey (July), the question was worded in a somewhat different and more complex fashion, and although there was once again a substantial majority against a tax cut, it was less lopsided—52% opposed and 36% in favor (Gallup, 1972 [Q10]). Thus, at least as far back as 1946 the public showed a consistent, strong opposition to voting itself a tax cut financed by deficit, with the opposition running typically around 70%.

A further indication of opposition to deficit spending is to be found in the public's strong support of a constitutional amendment to balance the federal budget. In a series of surveys conducted between March 1976 and July 1985, the percent in favor of such an amendment was typically between 65% and 81% (Gallup, 1978, 1979; Gallup International, 1980, 1981, 1985 [Q17, Q19, Q20, Q27]). In an analysis of some of these surveys, Blinder and Holtz-Eakin (1984) confirm that support for the amendment is substantially rooted in fiscal conservatism.

Perhaps even more striking evidence of such conservatism comes from responses to three surveys conducted between 1946 and 1956 in which respondents were asked what to do with an actual or potential budget surplus—should it be used to cut taxes or to reduce the national debt? The percentage who favored reducing the debt rather than taxes is amazingly high; it actually represents a plurality in two of the sur-

worded items posed by Katona and his colleagues, between August 1962 and August 1963, produced similar levels of support for a tax cut (Katona et al., 1964:201 [Q14, Q15]). Evidently, alternative wordings that omit reference to potential budget deficits tend to shift the issue from one of *national* well-being to one of *personal* well-being. As Katona notes in a recent review of the 1962–63 period, ". . . the majority of Americans agreed it would be best for *them* to pay lower taxes, but bad for the country. 'I'd like to pay lower taxes' and 'the government can't afford it' were two frequent responses" (Katona, 1981:7). Since in the present paper we are primarily concerned with people's assessment of the national implications of tax cuts rather than with their perception of its purely proximate consequences, and since many people evidently can have both levels in mind, items making explicit reference to potential deficits clearly provide the better indicator.

veys (53% versus 38% in April 1947 and 49% versus 43% in January 1956) and close to half in the other (44% versus 48% in November 1946) (Gallup, 1972 [Q2, Q3, Q11]).

We can conclude, then, that evidence of public opposition to tax cuts leading to deficits is overwhelming. This makes the question of why deficits have recently been so high a very perplexing one.

Are Democratic Governments Deficit-Prone?

Not surprisingly, this question has elicited the interest of several authors and has led to a number of theories. One widely held view is that a bias toward budget deficit is built into our system of budget making and can only be eliminated by adoption of some form of constitutional amendment. The best known advocate of this view, James Buchanan, has asserted, "Fiscal prudence simply cannot be made to pay off in democracy" (Buchanan, 1985:217). The reason is that "deficits allow politicians to increase spending without having directly and forthrightly to raise taxes. There is little obstacle to such a policy. Surpluses, on the other hand, require government to raise taxes without increasing spending—a program far more capable of generating political opposition than budget deficits" (Buchanan and Wagner, 1978:4–5). Furthermore, according to Buchanan the tendency to deficits has greatly increased in the postwar era because of the Keynesian revolution. This is not because Keynes favored deficits, but rather because he overthrew the previous "Victorian fiscal morality" embodied "in the long standing rules for fiscal–monetary prudence . . . [that] were required to hold the tribal instinct in check" (Buchanan, 1985:192).

Unfortunately, these bold hypotheses do not find much support in the historical record of the federal budget. Figure 1 illustrates this point by exhibiting the fiscal deficit or surplus in percent of GNP for the last 100 years (1887 to 1986). It includes every year except major wars (1917–1919 and 1941–1945) and the Great Depression (1931–1940)—leaving a total of 82 years of observations. It is apparent that at least up to 1970, a period of 65 years, there is no evidence whatever of an inherent bias toward deficits. If we call a budget in balance as long as the surplus relative to GNP is within, say, plus or minus one-half of one percent, one finds that in over half of these years—33 out of 65—the budget shows no significant departure from balance. The remaining years include 10 significant deficits, but these are more than offset by no less than 22 years of significant surplus. Clearly, Congress and the administration succeeded pretty well in steering away from deficits. This was in the absence of any constitutional requirement—simply a result of good government and, presumably, of public opinion pressure.

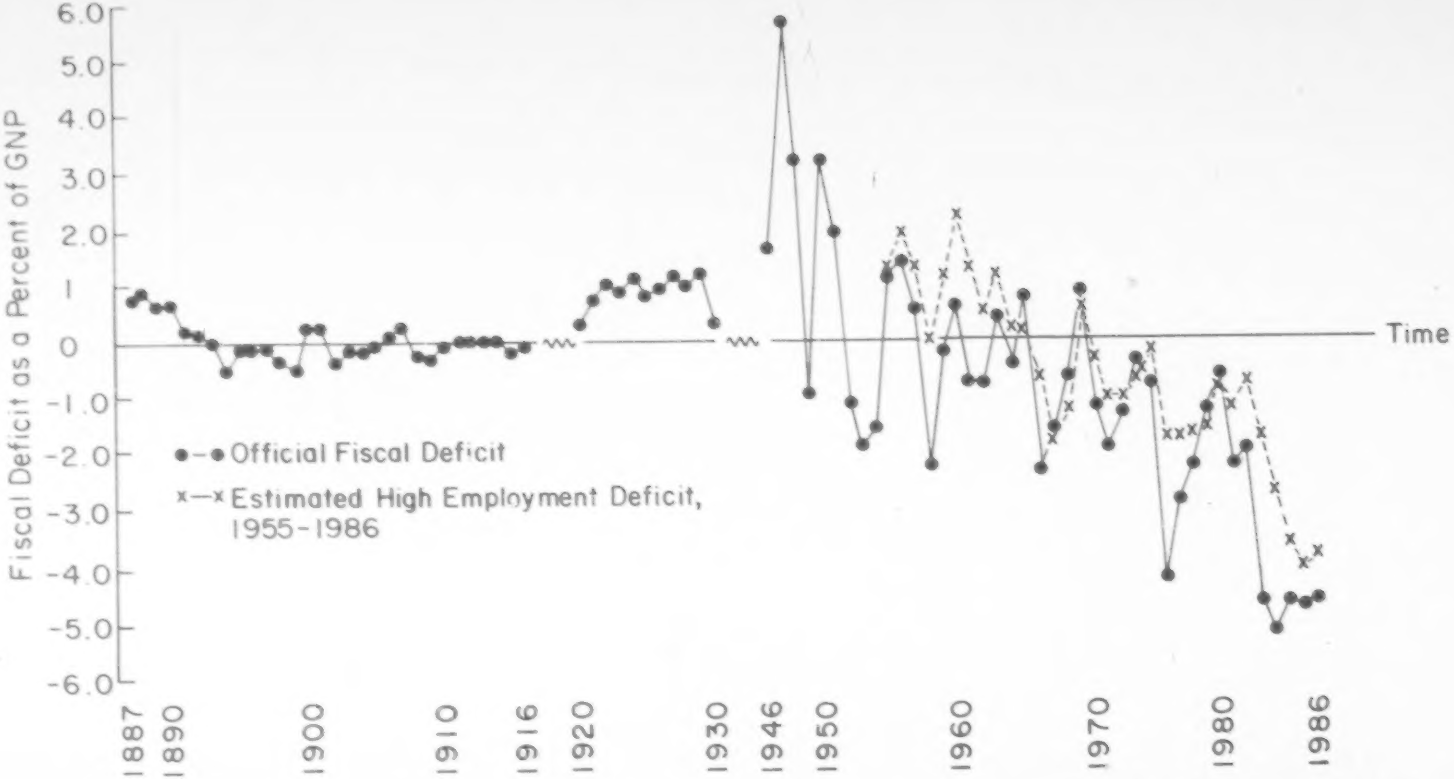

Figure 1. The Fiscal Deficit or Surplus of the United States over the Last Century (Percent of GNP). SOURCES: *Official Fiscal Deficit: 1887–1954*, U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1971:224 (table, series F1-5), 1104–1105 (table, series Y335–342); *1955–1984*, Eisner 1986:196, table B11; *1985*, Economic Report of the President, 1986, table B78; *1986*, Ibid., estimated from fiscal year deficit. *Estimated High Employment Deficit: 1955–1975*, Eisner, 1986:87, table 8.3, col. 2; *1976–1986*, Holloway, 1986:17, table 6, col. 7.

This story, however, is incomplete in one sense. An examination of the graph will reveal that the frequency of deficits tended to increase in time. Thus, in the 41 years preceding the Great Depression, from 1887 to 1930 (but excluding 1917–1919), there were 27 years of no significant imbalance, or over two-thirds; moreover, there was but one barely significant deficit, while there were 13 years of significant surpluses. Thus, in this initial period there was a definite bias, but in favor of surplus, suggesting an extremely conservative approach to the budget. Between 1946 and 1969 the fiscal stance appears to take a less conservative turn, as there are only 6 years in which the imbalance is less than 1/2 percent and as many as 9 years of deficits in excess of that limit. This would seem consistent with the Buchanan (1985) hypothesis. However, this appearance is misleading because it reflects, at least in part, the striking increase in the variability of the fiscal balance since the end of World War II. But this greater variability, in turn, is but the expected outcome of the enormous growth in the size of the government budget relative to GNP. At the beginning of the period, in 1887, expenditures represented less than 2.5% of GNP, and by 1930 it had grown only to less than 3%. But by 1946 it had jumped to nearly 17.5%. The rise has continued even beyond 1946 but at a modest pace, reaching not quite 25% by the end of the period. The growth implies that the same relative short fall of receipts as compared with outlays would result in a much larger deficit, relative to GNP, in the period after 1946 than before. Thus, to make the pre- and post–World War II figures more nearly comparable, one should broaden the range outside of which an imbalance is regarded as significant. If, accordingly, we raise the limits for a significant imbalance to plus or minus 1%—which corresponds roughly to an imbalance in excess of 5% of expenditure—then one finds that also between 1946 and 1969, 13 years, or more than half, do not show significant imbalances; furthermore, the number of years of significant deficits is down to 5 and is more than balanced by 6 years of significant surplus. In addition, most of the 5 deficits have special causes, as explained below.

However, when we come to the last 16 years, we find a remarkably different story. Even using the 1% standard, significant deficits occur in all but 3 years, without a single year of significant surplus to offset them.

The 1970 Break—A Shift in Public Opinion?

How can one account for this rather abrupt major change? Could it be that a significant shift has occurred between the 1960s and the 1970s in public attitudes in the form of reduced qualms about budget deficits and a concomitant greater willingness to shift the current cost of government to future generations? There is certainly some prima facie support for this hypothesis. A particularly striking piece of evidence is the overwhelming opposition expressed by the public in recent years to higher taxes as a means for reducing the deficit. Thus, as early as November 1981, Gallup confronted respondents with a forecast of a 1982 deficit of $80 to $100 billion and asked them "Do you think there should or should not be an increase Federal Income Taxes to help reduce the deficit?" The reply was an overwhelming rejection of tax increases—70% against versus 19% in favor. Similarly worded questions were asked seven times between January 1983 and January 1986 with rather similar results: the proportion opposing tax increases ranged between 79% and 67%, while that approving was between 14% and 29% (Gallup International, 1983, 1985, 1986 [Q22, Q24, Q28]).

One could readily find a variety of explanations for this recent seeming shift in public attitudes. One appealing explanation could be based on the growth of a social and psychological malaise that Christopher Lasch (1978) has called the "new narcissism." According to this view of the recent evolution of American society, increasing parental ineptitude at raising children has combined with the overwhelming social problems of our contemporary society to breed a new sense of helplessness which, in turn, has produced a compensatory, narcissistic drive oriented to obtaining quick, personal gratification. "We become disinclined to settle for anything less than everything—all at once and at this very moment" (Coles, 1979:104). In the present context, it is the selfish, wholly inconsiderate aspect of narcissism that is of relevance. If this form of social and psychological disturbance has been on the increase, it is clear that those who are under its sway would not be inclined to renounce current gratification even if at the expense of future generations. Attention has also been directed to the recent spread of credit cards that has spawned an enjoy-now–pay-later philosophy.

While these explanations for the change in attitude are ingenious and appealing, we suggest that they can be rejected on one basic ground: as we shall presently show, there is no evidence of significant change in public attitudes toward deficit spending, at least from the early postwar period to the present.

In support of this thesis, we may first note that it would be a mistake to infer, from the recent opposition to tax increases, that the public is not much concerned with the deficit. Between December 1984 and November 1985, when respondents were asked four times whether they felt that the federal budget deficit was a problem for the country, around 80% indicated they regarded it either as very serious (58%) or at least as fairly serious (22%) (Gallup International, 1984, 1985 [Q26]). In

September 1983, and again in May 1984, a similar question asked respondents how great a threat to the economy they felt the deficit was, and again it was found that 76% to 81% felt that it was either a great threat (46%), or at least somewhat of a threat (Gallup International, 1983, 1984 [Q25]).

More direct support for our contention of little change in attitude comes from evidence that the recent overwhelming opposition to higher taxes as the proper way of responding to a deficit (so apparently inconsistent with fiscal conservatism) is not a new phenomenon. As early as October 1949, Gallup asked a question fairly similar to that posed between 1981 and 1984, namely, "President Truman says the United States Government is spending more money than it is taking in and, therefore, federal income taxes must be raised next year. What is your opinion about raising federal income taxes next year?" Only 14% approved the proposal, with 76% rejecting it (Gallup, 1972 [Q5]). Earlier that same year, respondents were asked a basically similar question: Given that the government is now running a deficit and is expected to run an even bigger one next year, "which one of these three things do you think the government should do: (1) increase taxes; (2) cut down on expenses; (3) borrow whatever is necessary. . . ." Only 10% favored increasing taxes. (But interestingly enough, even fewer (9%) chose "borrow"—the overwhelming preference (71%) was "cut expenses" (Gallup, 1972 [Q4]).) A related question was asked some 10 years later in January 1959: "If the time should come when government income cannot pay for all the things in the budget, which would you favor—cutting back on certain things or increasing taxes?" Again, the proportion opting for tax increases was quite low—15%—with 72% favoring reduced expenditures (Gallup, 1972 [Q12]). Thus, the opposition to the use of taxes to close the deficit gap is not at all a novel feature of the last few years. When the question was posed some 30 and 40 years ago, the proportion favoring higher taxes was only between 10% and 15%, even lower than the recent one of 14% to 25%.

Correspondingly, there is evidence that the opposition to tax cuts when they result in a deficit is not limited to the Kennedy era and earlier. Although economic conditions were such that there was little occasion for polling the public on that issue, there is one item, asked in January of 1978, that has the requisite wording: "It has been said that tax cuts would lead to a bigger deficit in the federal budget and make it very difficult for the president to fulfill his promise to balance the budget by 1981. Do you think it is more important to work toward balancing the budget or to cut taxes at this time?" Those opposing cutting taxes again outweighed those favoring it (53% to 39%), although the margin is not quite as overwhelming as in the 1950s and 1960s (Gallup, 1979 [Q18]).

Thus, the evidence seems to point very clearly in the direction of no significant change in the attitude of the public toward public deficits and how to deal with them. Respondents have steadily regarded public deficits as serious and threatening to the future of the economy. They have steadfastly indicated a readiness to forego tax cuts that would result in deficits (sometimes even rejecting tax cuts when the budget was in surplus), *but* they have also overwhelmingly rejected tax increases as a recourse for reducing an existing deficit. But one may ask, "Are not these three sets of declared preferences mutually inconsistent?" It would seem, in particular, that foregoing tax cuts implies that one is willing to sacrifice current income to avoid deficits, while rejecting tax increases means that one is not.

In reality these replies need not be contradictory, and for two reasons. In the first place, those rejecting tax increases need not necessarily prefer a deficit to the loss of income—they might prefer the other possible way of closing the gap, namely, reduce expenditure. And, as was shown above, whenever respondents are given an opportunity to choose this alternative, a very large fraction does so. Furthermore, when the public is confronted with expenditures that are regarded as nonreducible, such as military expenditure for a popularly supported war, then an increase in income taxes tends to receive substantial support. Thus, when in October 1950 respondents were told that "To pay the costs of the Korean war . . . income taxes will have to be raised . . . or the government will have to borrow money and go deeper into debt," 51% thought the government should increase taxes and only 26% thought it should borrow (Gallup, 1972 [Q6]). A similar question asked in February 1951 finds 48% favoring higher taxes versus 24% favoring borrowing (Gallup, 1972 [Q7]).

In the second place, even if rejecting the tax increase meant choosing the deficit, this choice need not be inconsistent with rejecting a tax cut. Indeed, these choices simply imply that most of the public assesses the cost of foregoing a tax cut as being smaller than that of incurring a deficit, which in turn is assessed to be smaller than that of paying more taxes. This ranking is not inconsistent given a set of preferences that attach a high value to the status quo: giving up something one does not now enjoy may be less painful than giving up something one presently enjoys. If so, continuing to shoulder old taxes is less unbearable than shouldering new ones. Facing a deficit presumably lies in between.

These considerations, however, appear to point to a new puzzle. For if the budget-making process does not suffer from an *inherent* bias toward deficits and the public attitude toward deficits has not changed appreciably for many decades, why did the country shift more and more into deficits beginning with the turn of the 1960s?

The Role of Cyclical Factors and Inflation in the 1970–1980 Period

To solve the apparent puzzle, we suggest, to begin with, that despite appearances there really is no significant mystery for the years immediately preceding the Reagan administration, 1970–1980. There are two considerations supporting this assertion. The first is that the official budget figures are not always an accurate indicator of the fiscal stance, especially in the postwar period. Indeed, the difference between receipts and expenditures reflects not only the tax and transfer rates and other expenditures set by Congress, but also the ups and downs of business activity. These determine what receipts and expenditures actually materialize with the given rates. In general, it is known that the instability of the economy will be minimized if tax and transfer rates are not varied to counter the effect of business fluctuations on receipts, thus allowing the budget to go into deficit (or smaller surplus) when there is a contraction. This type of fiscal structure, which acts as a "built-in stabilizer" by causing deficits to rise when activity turns down, has been universally applied in the postwar period. Under these conditions, the most meaningful way to measure the fiscal stance of the government has proved to be the so-called full employment (or structural) surplus, i.e., the amount of surplus (or deficit) that would be generated by the existing tax, transfer, and expenditure structure at a level of income that corresponds roughly to full employment. As it happens, the 1970s, especially after the oil crisis of 1974, were a period of relatively high unemployment leading to substantial cyclical deficit. Correcting for this by replacing the actual deficit in a year with an estimated full employment deficit makes a substantial difference, up to 2½ percentage points in some years.

This can be seen from Figure 1, in which we represent by *x*'s joined by a dotted line the "full employment" surplus or deficit, beginning with 1955—the first year for which the information is available. It is seen that in terms of this measure in the period 1955–1970, there were but 3 deficits of which only 2 are significant, 1967 and 1968, and these 2 in turn are largely the consequence of war financing in connection with the Vietnam War. By contrast, there still are 7 significant surpluses. This indicates that the Buchanan hypothesis of a post-Keynesian tolerance for fiscal imprudence is rejected by the evidence.

As for the period 1970–1980, there were deficits in the first five years, but once they are cyclically adjusted, they are insignificant—within the 1% range.

In the remaining years, however, even the cyclically corrected figures show a deficit that is significant in 5 years out of 6. But there are good reasons why even these deficits might have failed to cause concern. The most important one is the role of inflation. Inflation tends to raise interest rates more or less by the rate of inflation. This, in turn, raises the total interest payment so that, taxes constant, the deficit appears to swell. But in reality the rise in interest rates merely offsets the inflation-induced loss of purchasing power of the debt—which is a loss for the creditor but a gain for the government. Thus, to measure the true interest cost of the government debt, one must subtract from total interest, and hence from the deficit itself, an adjustment equal to the product of the rate of inflation times the (net) debt outstanding. Between 1974 and 1981, inflation was appreciable in this country, running between 6% and 11% per year. Since the federal debt in that period was around one-quarter of GNP, the inflation correction is quite substantial: between 1½ and nearly 3 percentage points. With this correction, the deficit falls within the 1% margin in 10 years out of 11, while the remaining one shows a significant surplus!

We must conclude that up to 1980 the government continued to pursue, by and large, the conservative budget policy which prevailed since last century. This is confirmed by the fact that two common measures of the burden of the national debt, namely the ratio of (gross) debt to GNP and the (net) debt per capita in constant dollars, which began declining at the end of the war, continued their decline from 1970 to 1980, and in the latter year were at or close to their lowest value since the end of the war (Eisner, 1986).

It may be objected that while the public could be expected to have a rough understanding that deficits (and surpluses) of a purely cyclical character can be discounted, it is most doubtful that it would also understand, or know how to estimate, the appropriate correction for inflation. But this is not essential, for even if we confine ourselves to the cyclically adjusted series shown in the chart, it is easy to understand why the deficits even between 1975 and 1980 might not rate as a serious source of public concern: (1) the cyclically adjusted deficits were not very large—at most 2%, (2) some were the result of special measures intended to foster the recovery of the economy, (3) they were consistently decreasing in time so that by 1979 the amount was no longer significant, and (4) the public was occupied with much more serious concerns such as the high rate of unemployment and high inflation. Thus, when the public was asked by the Gallup Poll to indicate which was the most serious problem facing the country between 1970 and 1980, inflation and unemployment were typically mentioned by over 50% of the respondents, while government deficit or debt hardly gets mentioned (never more than 3%) (Gallup, 1980, 1981).

The Reagan Period—How the Explosion Came About

We thus arrive at the most recent years of the Reagan administration, 1981 to 1986. Here the picture is quite different: (1) the unadjusted figures show 6 huge deficits, (2) even the cyclically adjusted figures show 5 significant deficits out of 6, (3) beginning with 1983 the adjusted deficits are larger than any recorded in peacetime years, and (4) they show no sign of abating. The deficit adjusted for inflation, though a bit smaller, shows the same pattern, which is to be expected because inflation abated rapidly after 1981. We see all the indications of a sharp break with the conservative fiscal tradition.

How did such a sudden break come about, without any apparent change in public attitude and under a president whose major election campaign theme had been a crusade against the scourge of public deficits (which, ironically, were not really there, as the chart shows)?

To account for this baffling development, one must unravel two issues: (1) How did the administration and Congress manage, first, to slip into the deficit and then live with it for several years? and (2) Why did the public not rise up and demand an end to policies running counter to its own fiscal conservatism?

The key to the first puzzle seems to be the failure of the administration to realize the magnitude of the fiscal gap implied by the combination of both much lower tax rates and an increase in military expenditures—a failure convincingly depicted by Stockman (1986b) in *The Triumph of Politics*. Nor did it appreciate the difficulties associated with carrying out the cuts in expenditure that would be needed to prevent a further growth of the inherited deficit, especially after major items such as Social Security and interest payments were acknowledged as exempt from cuts. No doubt part of the delay in recognizing the problems came from the Laffer curve delusion: that cutting of taxes would have such a powerful effect on reducing tax evasion, on increasing work incentives, on encouraging both savings and investment, and ultimately on spurring economic expansion, that tax revenue might not fall much or might even increase. In fact, the growth rate turned out to be half as high as predicted, the tax revenue fell pretty much in line with the cut in rates, and, if anything, the saving rate fell. With the rising deficit cutting deeply into national savings, investment was at best maintained, and then only because it was financed by foreign capital, with traumatic consequences for the balance of trade.

Stockman himself gradually began to appreciate the impossibility of balancing the budget, while at the same time holding on to the tax cut. But the White House was not listening to his message, for there was no real willingness to face such unpleasant facts. Indeed, the tax reduction was so ideologically important and so popular that one could not jeopardize it by acknowledging and broadcasting its implications for massive deficits or deep expenditure cuts. As Stockman puts it: "I underestimated how determined [the president] was to stand pat on the tax cut he had originally enacted that was too big" (Stockman, 1986a), and "the truth had been buried . . . deliberately, in order to win the tax battle" (Stockman, 1986b:332). And if in the end the unavoidable big deficit would eventually turn up, it "would become a powerful battering ram forcing Congress to shrink the welfare state" (Stockman, 1986c:59).

By the beginning of 1982 the Council of Economic Advisers, despite its overoptimistic forecasts, had to acknowledge that the administration's tax and expenditure plan was going to create a huge deficit in 1982, almost unmatched in peacetime, and that it would be a long-lasting one, but the Council tried to reassure the public that this deficit would shrink to just over 1% by 1987. To this end, the president was prepared to cut some nondefense expenditure, but he failed to reckon with the fact that this was precisely what Congress was not willing to do—it would rather have raised taxes, unpopular as that might be. But failing that, it would rather put up with a deficit than accept deep cuts in nondefense expenditure. Since taxes could not be raised or defense expenditures cut over the opposition of the president, and nondefense outlays could not be appreciably reduced over the opposition of Congress, living with a deficit became the only feasible compromise—until the situation became unsustainable.

In light of the opinion polls, the public's initial acceptance of a policy of tax reduction after years of official budget deficits is presumably explainable by its trust in a newly elected, conservative leader who had won in a landslide. The administration's argument that the tax cut, through the Laffer curve, would produce a vast improvement in the economy after the sluggish years of the oil crisis, may also have come to be accepted by many. Certainly the public was unaware that the tax reductions would generate enormous deficits, and it did not have any reason to suspect this because the policy was being recommended by a man who projected an image of unswerving opposition to government deficits.

This explains why the tax cut was supported even though, on the basis of opinion polls, the public could be expected to reject a cut avowedly to be financed out of deficits. Once the tax law had been put over and the huge deficits began to make their appearance, the initial failure to push for remedial action can be understood in terms of the asymmetric attitude of the public toward the use of tax reductions and tax increases as ways of warding off deficits. As on previous occasions, the public was just not willing to close the fiscal gap by paying higher taxes. It was this confluence of White House and public opposition that prevented using the most natural remedy to an overdose of tax reductions—namely, reversing the cut.

There are indications that by rejecting a tax increase the public did not mean to endorse the deficit but rather to support cutting of government expenditure. But it is questionable whether there was enough consensus on which expenditures should be slashed and on whether they could be cut deeply enough to close the gap.[3] It is suggestive that when in May 1981 Gallup asked for a reaction to the cuts in spending proposed in the administration's budget—which were of course utterly inadequate to eliminate the deficit—only 12% of those polled thought they were too low as against 34% who labeled them as too high and 46% who viewed them as about right (Gallup International, 1981 [Q21]). In any event, the only program for which cuts have been repeatedly approved by a substantial majority has been National Defense (66% to 57% in favor versus 28% to 36% opposed), which happened to be the president's other sacred cow (Gallup International, 1983, 1985, 1986 [Q22]).

This lack of coherence, both within and between actors, that was needed to repair the harm done by the tax reform of 1981 would seem to explain the paralysis on remedial action that prevailed until 1985. One further cause of the acquiescence is most likely related to the public's failure to comprehend the true damage wrought by the deficit. To be sure, the deficit did produce the expected negative results. Interest rates skyrocketed and the balance of trade showed a massive deterioration, but the public was not led to connect these developments with the burgeoning deficit. Similarly, although the interest paid on the government debt rose substantially, the administration hid this from popular view by not increasing taxes and instead raising the needed revenue by more borrowing, thus further deepening the deficit. While remaining relatively unaware of these negative consequences, the public probably tended to assess the effects of the deficit by using the two indicators most commonly utilized in recent years to judge the performance of the economy: inflation and unemployment. In other words, they assumed that if the deficit was really bad for the economy, both these indicators should increase. Thus, in Gallup polls conducted in September 1983 and May 1984, some 80% of respondents indicated that they regarded the deficit as a threat to continued economic recovery (Gallup International, 1983, 1984). This inference was, of course, quite wrong—deficits normally have little relation to inflation and should tend, if anything, to raise employment. Thus, when both inflation and unemployment continued to abate after the spurt in deficit spending, this came as no surprise to many economists but did not fit well with the public's stereotype. In addition, the tax reduction contributed to a sense of improved well-being, though this only reflected the "enjoy now, pay later" character of the public deficit. Taken together these factors might be expected to nurture a feeling that the deficit did not, after all, require such urgent mending.

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[3] Recent studies of public attitudes on government spending and taxation fail to provide a coherent picture of the public's willingness to accept budget reductions commensurate with its desire to maintain or decrease levels of taxation. In reviewing a large body of national poll data, Ladd (1979) suggests that there are some major contradictions: "Public attitudes vis-a-vis . . . State . . . taxing and spending are splendidly ambivalent. Specifically, there is real resistance to taxation and real support for the services which taxation provides" (p. 132). On the other hand, Welch (1985), based on a specifically designed study conducted in one Midwestern state, finds that only a small proportion of her respondents favored a "free lunch"—an increase in government services coupled with neither budget reallocation nor an increase in taxes.

The paralysis was finally broken only by the Gramm-Rudman bill which made the deficit reduction the government's fixed and unchangeable responsibility, to which all other priorities had to be subordinated. One may criticize many aspects of the specific bill, but that concept seems essential to getting out of the fiscal morass.

Summary and Implications

To summarize, the great deficits that began in 1982 are something altogether unparalleled in the fiscal history of the United States, except during major wars and depressions. They therefore cannot be attributed to any failure inherent in our budget-making process that could be overcome only by a balanced budget amendment Nor can they be attributed to any fundamental change in the attitudes of the public; despite appearances, the opposition to government deficits has remained steadfast and stable as far back as public opinion polls are available. At the same time, though, this opposition does not rank as high as the antagonism to raising taxes as a way of reducing deficits (except in national emergencies).

The way the great leap into the red occurred nonetheless is through the large tax cut of 1981. The public accepted it on the belief, nourished by very persuasive administration arguments, that the tax reform would not be a serious source of deficit because of its powerful evasion-reducing and supply-stimulating effects, and because of generic forthcoming cuts in expenditure. It is somewhat of an open question whether the administration was entirely candid in making these claims or whether, instead, it felt justified in sacrificing candor to the higher goal of cutting taxes. Once the tax cut was enacted and followed by a hefty rise in defense expenditures, the deficit became evident, but no effective action to eliminate it could be pieced together because of the resistance to tax increases, the profound divisions about what expenditures could and could not be cut, and the failure of the public to understand properly the costs of the deficit.[4]

Is there a lesson for the American people in this experience? One might suggest two. First, the American public should learn to mistrust extravagant claims about being able to have one's cake and eat it too, such as have been pushed by the administration and other prophets of the Laffer curve. Second, it should be leery of tax cuts until there is a surplus to be distributed, or until one is clearly in the making, through policies which have ample consensus.

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[4] Paul E. Peterson (1985) concurs with our conclusion that the great leap in deficit financing must be laid on the shoulders of the administration rather than on any chronic shortcoming of the system. However, his conclusion rests more on the fact that "Congress seems to defer to the President on fiscal policy" than on the administration's success in misleading the public (and perhaps itself).

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Appendix: Opinion Items Referred to in the Text

(From Gallup Polls Unless Otherwise Noted)

Q1 (8/46): Will you tell me what is meant by "balancing the federal budget"?

Generally correct answer	49%
Incorrect answer	51

(Asked of those giving generally correct answers) Some people say that if we're going to balance the federal budget we've got to keep income taxes at the present rates. Others say it is more important to cut income taxes than to balance the budget. Which do you think is more important to do in the coming year—balance the budget or cut income taxes?

Balance budget	71%
Cut income taxes	20
No opinion	9

Q2 (11/46): Do you think the new Congress should reduce income taxes in 1947, or should this wait until some of the national debt has been paid off?

Wait	44%
Cut taxes	48
No opinion	8

Q3 (4/47): The United States to-day has a billion dollar surplus in its running expenses. Should this money be used to reduce income taxes, or should it be used to reduce the national debt?

Reduce debt	53%
Cut taxes	38
No opinion	9

Q4 (5/49): As you know, the government in Washington is now spending more money than it is taking in. The outlook for next year is that still more money will be spent than is taken in. In view of this, which one of these three things [on card] do you think the government should do: (1) increase taxes; (2) cut down on expenses; (3) borrow whatever is necessary—that is, increase the national debt?

Increase taxes	10%
Cut expenses	71
Borrow	9
No opinion	10

Q5 (10/49): President Truman says the United States Government is spending more money than it is taking in and, therefore, federal income taxes must be raised next year. What is your opinion about raising federal income taxes next year?

Against it, don't like it, opposed	46%
Taxes already too high	22
Cut government expenses instead	8
General approval: if needed, Truman probably right	14
Miscellaneous	6
No opinion	7

Q6 (10/50): Congress voted recently to increase taxes for all taxpayers. To pay the costs of the Korean War and our defense program, income taxes will have to be raised even more or the government will have to borrow money and go deeper into debt. Which do you think the government should do—increase income taxes still more, or borrow more money?

Borrow	26%
Increase taxes	51
Other answers	9
No opinion	14

Q7 (2/51): Our government in Washington plans to spend this coming year about $25 billion more than was spent last year for national defense. How do you, yourself, think this additional money for defense should be raised—mostly by an increase in personal income taxes, or mostly by borrowing money to be paid back later?

Borrowing	24%
Increasing taxes	48
Other	14
No opinion	14

Q8 (1/53): If the new Congress finds that it cannot balance the budget for this year and at the same time reduce income taxes, which do you think it should try to do first?

Balance the budget	67%
Reduce taxes	26
No opinion	7

Q9 (2/53): Some members of Congress argue that federal income tax should be cut ten percent beginning this July 1. Others argue that income taxes should not be cut until the budget is balanced. With which side do you agree?

Balance budget first	69%
Cut taxes first	25
No opinion	6

Q10 (7/53): The Republicans have said they will cut personal income taxes and business taxes next January. Some people say that if this is done, the budget could not be balanced. If this is the case, should taxes be cut in January or not?

Should not be cut	52%
Should be	36
No opinion	12

Q11 (1/56): If the government has any money left over after paying expenses, should this money be used to reduce the national debt or to reduce income taxes?

Reduce debt	49%
Reduce taxes	43
No opinion	8

Q12 (1/59): If the time should come when government income cannot pay for all the things in the budget, which would you favor—cutting back on certain things or increasing taxes?

Favor cutting back	72%
Favor increased taxes	15
No opinion	13

Q13 (6/62): Would you favor or oppose a cut in federal income taxes at this time, if a cut meant the government would go further into debt?

Oppose tax cut	72%
Favor	19
No opinion	9

Q14 (8/62): [Survey Research Center, Survey of Consumer Finances] President Kennedy proposed that income taxes should be reduced next year; what do you think of this proposal?

Good idea	65%
Bad idea	19
Depends	7
Don't know	9

Q15 (5/63): [Survey Research Center, Survey of Consumer Finances] Our government is considering a proposal to reduce income taxes next year; what do you think of this proposal?

	5/63	*8/63*
Good idea	65%	68%
Bad idea	17	11
Depends	4	7
Don't know	14	14

Q16 (9/63): Have you read or heard about the Kennedy proposal to reduce income taxes?

Yes	52%
No	48

(Asked of those who had read or heard about the proposal) How do you, yourself, feel? Do you favor or oppose a cut in income taxes now?

Favor	60%
Oppose	29
No opinion	11

Q17 (3/76): Would you favor or oppose a constitutional amendment that would require Congress to balance the federal budget each year, that is, keep taxes and expenditures in balance?

	3/76	*6/78*	*2/79*
Favor	78%	81%	78%
Oppose	13	11	12
No opinion	9	8	10

Q18 (1/78): It has been said that tax cuts would lead to a bigger deficit in the federal budget and make it very difficult for the president to fulfill his promise to balance the budget by 1981. Do you think it is more important to work toward balancing the budget or to cut taxes at this time?

Work toward balancing budget	53%
Cut taxes	39
Don't know	8

Q19 (3/80): A proposed amendment to the constitution would require Congress to approve a balanced federal budget each year. Government spending would have to be limited to no more than expected revenues, unless a three-fifths majority of Congress voted to spend more than expected revenue. Would you favor or oppose this amendment to the constitution?

Favor	67%
Oppose	13
Don't know	20

Q20 (4/81): Have you read or heard about the proposal for a constitutional amendment which would require the federal government to balance the national budget each year? A proposed amendment to the constitution would require Congress to approve a balanced federal budget each year. Government spending would have to be limited to no more than expected revenues unless a three-fifths majority of Congress voted to spend more than expected revenue. Would you favor or oppose this amendment to the constitution?

	4/81	*9/81*
Favor	65%	67%
Oppose	21	19
No opinion	14	14

Q21 (5/81): The Reagan Administration has called for cuts in the federal budget in a number of areas. Do you feel that the total amount of spending cuts that the Reagan Administration wants to make is too high, too low, or about the right amount?

Too high	34%
Too low	12
About right	46

Q22 (4/85): At present the federal budget deficit is running at the rate of over 200 billion dollars per year. Basically, there are only a few ways this deficit can be reduced. Please tell me whether you approve of each of the following ways to reduce the deficit. Cut defense spending? Cut spending for social programs? Raise income taxes? Cut entitlement programs?

	Cut Defense	*Cut Soc. Prog.*	*Raise Taxes*	*Cut Entit. Prog.*
		1/83		
Approve	57%	41%	18%	12%
Disapprove	36	52	77	83
No opinion	7	7	5	5
		12/84		
Approve	61%	41%	23%	11%
Disapprove	32	52	72	84
No opinion	7	7	5	5
		4/85		
Approve	66%	39%	18%	9%
Disapprove	28	55	76	87
No opinion	6	6	6	4
		1/86		
Approve	59%	42%	22%	9%
Disapprove	33	51	73	88
No opinion	8	7	5	3

Q23 (11/81): Economists are now predicting that there will be an 80 to 100 billion dollar deficit in the Federal budget for fiscal 1982. Do you think there should or should not be an increase in Federal income taxes to help reduce this deficit?

Should not be an increase in taxes	70%
Should be	19
No opinion	11

Q24 (9/83): It is estimated that the Federal government's budget deficit for fiscal 1984 will be as much as $200 billion—that is, it will spend more than it takes in—unless some steps are taken to reduce the size of the deficit. Do you approve or disapprove of raising income taxes as a way of reducing the deficit?

Disapprove of raising taxes	79%
Approve	14
No opinion	7

Q25 (9/83): For each item on this list, please tell me whether you think it will be a great threat, somewhat of a threat, or not much of a threat to continued recovery of the economy. The federal government's budget deficit?

	9/83	*5/84*
Great threat	42%	50%
Somewhat	34	31
Not much	13	10
No opinion	11	9

Q26 (12/84): In your opinion, is the current Federal budget deficit a very serious problem for the country, a fairly serious problem, not a serious problem, or is this something you haven't thought much about?

	12/84	*4/85*	*8/85*	*11/85*
Very serious	57%	58%	57%	61%
Fairly serious	21	23	21	23
Not serious	2	5	2	3
Haven't thought about	20	12	20	12

Q27 (8/85): Under a proposed constitutional amendment, any federal budget passed by Congress would have projected tax revenues that are equal to projected government spending unless a three-fifths majority of Congress voted not to do so. Would you favor or oppose this amendment to the constitution?

Favor	49%
Oppose	27
No opinion	24

Q28 (8/85): Would you approve or disapprove of raising personal income taxes to reduce the federal budget deficit?

	8/85	*11/85*
Disapprove	68%	67%
Approve	25	29
No opinion	7	4

CHANGE VERSUS CONTINUITY IN WEST GERMAN PUBLIC ATTITUDES ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN THE EARLY 1980s

HANS RATTINGER

Abstract This article first describes trends of a few key data on public opinion on national security in West Germany since 1970, and then examines in some detail the development and structure of public attitudes on NATO's double-track decision and its implementation in the early 1980s. It addresses the problems of measuring such attitudes and interpreting relevant public opinion data in the light of levels of public awareness and of the personal importance of these matters for respondents. In that context, the results of some methodological experiments to ascertain the impact of question formats and wordings on response distributions for defense policy survey items are also presented. Generational replacement and partisan polarization hypotheses to account for the dynamics of these attitudes are compared. The main finding here is that growing dissent among the major parties over missile deployment has played a much greater role in realigning public opinion than has the coming of age of a predominantly antinuclear and antidefense "successor generation."

> One of the most ambiguous, imprecise and elusive aspects of security [is] that of the domestic factors influencing defense policies, doctrines and burdens. This . . . subject has generally been unexplored in traditional strategic studies. . . . As long as domestic consensus on these matters existed, there was no real pressure to address them; that idyllic state of affairs no longer exists. An important part of the public in our societies is no longer willing to trust governments or experts or even the media on matters of defense policy. (Bertram, 1983:1)

HANS RATTINGER holds a doctorate in Political Science from the University of Freiburg, West Germany. Since 1979 he has been Professor of Political Science at the University of Bamberg. Currently he is Visiting Professor at the University of Toronto.

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Introduction

Political scientists in the United States have long realized the importance of public opinion on foreign policy and national security (see, e.g., Rosenau, 1961; Russett and Stepan, 1973). In the Federal Republic, on the other hand, there has been little comparable scholarly research for a variety of reasons: First, mass protest against West German rearmament, against its possible nuclear component, and against NATO membership was a transient phenomenon that occurred during a period when the course of the country's postwar foreign policy still had to be defined and consolidated. Second, national security concerns ranked low in public political priorities and debates in the 1960s and 1970s. This statement is not contradicted by the public attention that "Ostpolitik" received after the SPD-FDP government came to power in 1969, because this attention mainly consisted of widespread *support* for the new coalition's goals, and because the national security context of "Ostpolitik" never played a major role. Third, national security debates in the Federal Republic have largely been restricted to the elite level, and even there they have predominantly been reflective of technological and/or doctrinal innovations originating from the United States. Up to the late 1970s the almost complete absence of a national security nonelite "issue public" in West Germany was often lamented, so it is not surprising that public opinion on these issues was rarely polled or analyzed systematically.

According to the above quotation, this "idyllic state of affairs" is gone, the paradise of popular national security consensus "in our societies" has been lost. Like many similar assertions that could be heard in the past couple of years, this refers to many West European nations, not only the Federal Republic. Most such statements proceed from the extent and intensity of protest against NATO's December 1979 double-track decision to negotiate with the USSR about nuclear weapons in Europe and to introduce new American systems (Pershing II and cruise missiles) should these negotiations fail to produce substantial Eastern reductions, and against subsequent preparations for deployment of intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) in Western Europe. This protest was taken by many observers as an indication of radical change that, depending upon ideological predilections, was interpreted either as a long overdue democratization of defense policy or as a dangerous erosion of its societal foundations.

Regardless of such divergent interpretations, the alleged "revolt of the masses" of the early 1980s made national security analysts in many countries "discover" public opinion and survey research, formerly not central to their attention, and it made pollsters aware of the market for such data. As a consequence of this rediscovery of "linkage politics"

(Rosenau, 1969), the war of words over the double-track decision and its implementation was not only fought with the public's response in mind, but also with key arguments being drawn from its purported preferences, and even about what these preferences really looked like.

In this process of discovering public opinion and survey methodology many defense policy experts and decision makers also borrowed an explanatory paradigm already well established in political sociology, i.e., generational replacement (see, e.g., Inglehart, 1977). This explanation holds that public mobilization over national security issues away from established policies is due to the coming of age of new cohorts that lack the historical experiences and values that have shaped the design and goals of postwar Western efforts to provide peace and security. This "successor generation" hypothesis, by the way, is equally popular with those who view the developments of recent years with concern as with those who express their sympathies (see, e.g., Szabo, 1983, 1984; Mushaben, 1984).

Preoccupied (as they mostly have to be) with political matters of the day, many decision makers and national security experts approach relevant public opinion data in a style which sometimes appears rather breathless. Chasing after the most recent polling results (that hopefully fit one's own views) is often preferred over detached and systematic evaluation and analysis. From their point of view, attitudes on INF deployment, for example, are probably yesterday's news, since this process has already been going on now for quite some time without massive civil unrest. What would count today for them is data on public reactions to SDI, analogous European schemes, the Reykjavik summit, etc.

In this report on public attitudes on national security affairs in West Germany in the early 1980s, no effort will be made to satisfy such craving for the most up-to-date information. Instead, an attempt will be made to put the data available about the experience with the double-track decision and with INF into perspective, looking for lessons to be learned and for answers to a few general but basic questions. These questions are as follows: First, is there really evidence of the asserted radical changes in mass opinion on national security since the double-track decision was taken? Second, is it true, as the "successor generation" hypothesis posits, that such attitudes are more clearly polarized along generational divides than along most other social and political cleavages? Third, to what extent is it possible to describe survey responses on these matters as genuine opinions, i.e., stable attitudes based upon information and experience, that could even be defended against dissenting opinions or counterevidence?

In the following three sections we will, therefore, first have a look at a few trends of public attitudes on national security since 1970. In the second step the polarization of such opinions in the early 1980s along generational lines will be compared to that along partisan lines. Finally, the sensitivity of survey responses on the double-track decision and on INF deployment in Western Europe vis-à-vis variations of question wording will be demonstrated. In that context, we will also summarize data about the level of the public's information on these matters and will present results from experiments designed to influence responses on defense policy survey items by question formats and wordings. This is the only part where our own data will be used; otherwise this article relies on secondary analysis of data compiled from a multitude of sources for reports published elsewhere (Rattinger, 1985; Rattinger and Heinlein, 1986).[1]

Some Trends 1970–1984

In order to obtain a meaningful evaluation of the extent of changes in public opinion on defense policy in the early 1980s it is mandatory to have comparisons with earlier periods. If what has been said above regarding the discovery of this aspect of popular attitudes in the wake of the double-track decision is true, the scope for such comparisons obviously has to be limited. Prior to 1979 there was much less incentive to do this kind of polling, and what earlier data is available naturally does not refer to the subject matter of the more recent controversies. An abundance of up-to-date information on very detailed and specific aspects of defense-related attitudes stands in stark contrast to the relative paucity of comparable earlier findings that, moreover, mainly cover only broader orientations toward national security. Nevertheless, the longitudinal comparisons that can be made offer some useful insights.

In the past half decade one could often hear the argument that the surge of peace movement activities indicated a rapidly growing concern within the German population over the stability of peace. Figure 1 shows evaluations of the importance of economic problems and of the preservation of peace as political tasks for the Federal Republic from 1970 to 1984.[2] The difference in the order of magnitude of nominations

---

[1] All Figures and Tables 1–3 of this article summarize findings from a large number of surveys taken by a variety of polling institutes. Without exception, these surveys were nationwide and among German nationals of voting age (i.e., 18 years and older). Numbers of respondents usually range from 1500 to 2000; occasionally sample size is only about 1000 to 1200. To maintain readability, complete question wordings are omitted from Table 1, and for the time series in Figures 1–4 there is no list of what institute supplied data for which years. This is fully documented in Rattinger and Heinlein, 1986, from which these tables and figures are condensed. Copies of these tables or of the underlying original reports by the survey research institutes will be supplied on request by the author.

[2] The trend lines in Figures 1–4 have been computed by simple bivariate regression. For

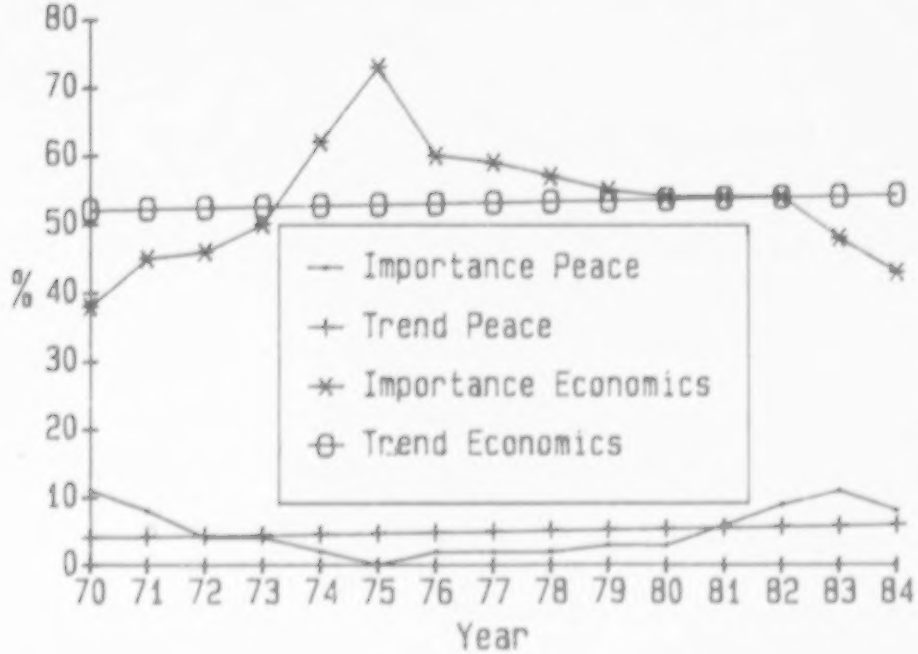

Figure 1. Attitudes on the Importance of Peace and of Economic Issues, 1970–1984.

Percentages of total responses for *peace* on the one hand and *economic issues* (i.e., unemployment, inflation, and economic growth) on the other hand to the question "In your opinion, what are currently the most important political problems for the Federal Republic?" Multiple responses (up to three) were allowed. *Source:* Rattinger and Heinlein, 1986: table 1; data from Forschungsgruppe Wahlen in Mannheim (FGW), Institut für Demoskopie in Allensbach (IfD), Sozialwissenschaftliches Forschungsinstitut der Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in Sankt Augustin (SFK), Zentralarchiv für empirische Sozialforschung in Cologne (ZA).

for the two policy arenas speaks for itself. Considering that with open-ended questions of this sort a respondent on the average names about 2.5 political problems, it is obvious that each respondent is expected to name *at least* one economic problem, whereas the share of people volunteering the preservation of peace as a political problem for the Federal Republic never much exceeded 20%, usually even being much lower. That the overall percentage of nominations for "peace" from 1980 to 1983 increased from 3% to 10% is not really surprising and by no means resembles radical change; similar values could already be observed in the early 1970s. Moreover, in 1984 this share was already declining again. If one wants to know what a quick and strong redefini-

computing percentages for Figures 2, 3, and 4, "don't know," "undecided," and refusals were omitted. Mean values 1970–1984 are as follows: Importance Peace, 5; Importance Economics, 53; Warsaw Pact Stronger, 42; Military Threat, 52; Favor U.S. Withdrawal, 25; German NATO Membership, 61; Defense Possible, 49; Bundeswehr (very) Important, 74.

tion of popular priorities looks like, one can find it, instead, in the "importance of economics" curve that within two years soared from below 50% to well above 70% of overall responses when recession began to hit the Federal Republic in the wake of the increase of oil prices following the 1973 Middle East war.

During the debate over the double-track decision and its implementation it was also often asserted that one of the crucial changes in Western publics' attitudes was an increasing failure to recognize the Soviet military buildup and its consequences. Figure 2 demonstrates that this is somewhat of an overstatement for the West German population at large. Starting at under 30% in the early 1970s, the share of people perceiving Eastern military superiority has been oscillating between 40% and slightly above 50% since 1975, no systematic decline since 1980 being recognizable. Similarly, perceptions of a military threat emanating from the Eastern bloc, following a steady increase from 1970 to 1976 from below 40% to well above 50%, have since then fluctuated around 50%. The peak of 1980 most likely is reflective of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and maybe of the Iranian hostage crisis. Again, the data for the early 1980s indicate no reversal into a downward trend.

A third diagnosis frequently advanced within the framework of the "successor generation" hypothesis is that of pacifism, neutralism, and anti-Americanism spreading quickly in West Germany. Again, the development of mass opinion depicted in Figure 3 does not really support this diagnosis. Approval of German membership in NATO has increased rather consistently, reaching peak, and not minimum, values in the 1980s. In fact, support for NATO membership in the 1950s and 1960s usually was even lower than in the early 1970s, so that there has been a continuous upward trend for about three decades. The percentage of people favoring withdrawal of U.S. troops from Europe, on the other hand, declined over the 1970s. From 1980 through 1982 this demand again became somewhat more popular, but the level of the earlier 1970s was not reached, and the reversal of the trend did not last.

Figure 4, finally, shows popular evaluations of the importance of the Bundeswehr (Federal Armed Forces) for the Federal Republic and of the chances that the country could be defended militarily in case of aggression. The latter time series, again, exhibits no significant shift since the onset of the new defense debates. The fact that only about one-half of those who respond to such survey items believe in the possibility of successful military defense certainly reflects a considerable degree of skepticism, but that is not at all a novel phenomenon. Evaluations of the Bundeswehr as "important" or "very important" for the country are comparatively easy to make as long as such questions do not require trade-offs or ranking institutions as to their impor-

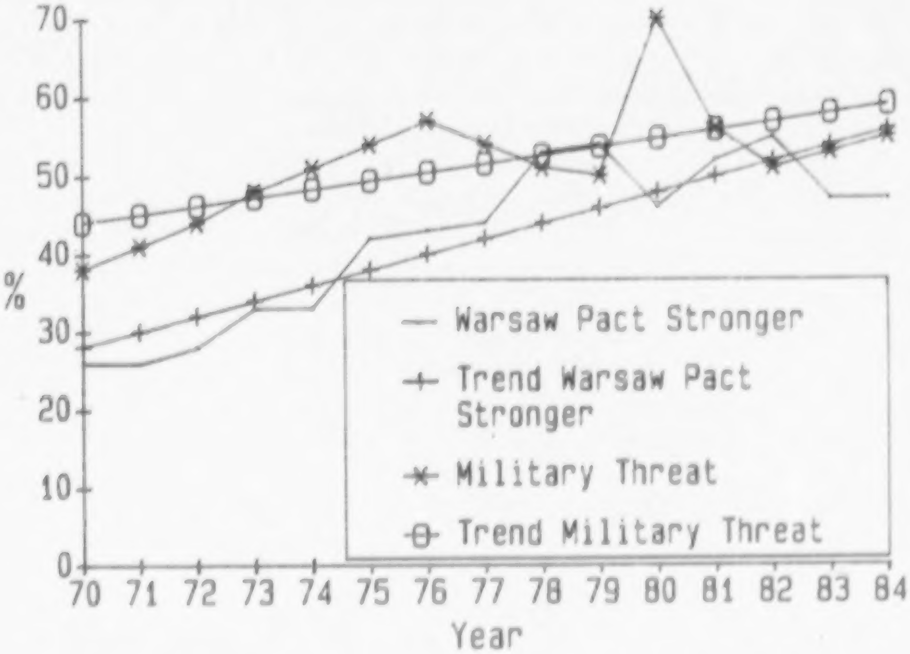

Figure 2. Attitudes on the Military Balance and the Military Threat, 1970–1984.

Warsaw Pact Stronger: Percentage replying "Warsaw Pact" or the "East" to the question "Who do you think is currently superior in military terms, NATO or the Eastern bloc, the Warsaw Pact, or are both equally strong?" *Source:* Rattinger and Heinlein, 1986: table 4; data from EMNID-Institut in Bielefeld (EMNID), FGW, IfD, Sozialwissenschaftliches Institut der Bundeswehr in Munich (SOWI).

Military Threat: Percentage indicating perceptions of threat in response to the question "What do you think, is the Federal Republic currently being threatened militarily by the East or not?" *Source:* Rattinger and Heinlein, 1986: table 6; data from FGW, IfD, Sozialwissenschaftliches Institut Nowak und Sörgel in Munich (SINUS), SOWI.

tance. The data in Figure 4, therefore, should not necessarily be read as reflecting great enthusiasm about the armed forces. What matters here, however, is that the decline visible in the early 1980s was not dramatic and did not lead to levels of support below those observed ten years earlier.

To sum up briefly the results presented so far: If one looks at a few key survey items on defense policy for which longitudinally comparable data are available, dramatic discontinuities in aggregate West German public opinion between the 1970s and the 1980s cannot be discerned. Instead, we observe a remarkable degree of stability—apart from a few outliers in our time series (like threat perception in 1980) that can plausibly be accounted for. To be sure, this statement refers to the West German public in total, whereas the "successor generation"

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CORRECTION

In his review of *The People and the Press* (Poll Review, POQ, Fall 1987), Seymour Sudman criticizes the Gallup Organization for using 1970 Census data as a sampling frame for the various samples drawn as part of the project. Gallup was negligent, but the error was not one of methodological neglect. Had the technical appendix of the final report been proofread more carefully, "1970" would have been corrected to "1980."

TRENDS IN POLITICAL TOLERANCE

JOHN MUELLER

Abstract Some researchers find a substantial increase in political tolerance since the 1950s, while others find the increase to be "illusory"—the public is more tolerant now of leftists, but has simply found other targets on which to vent its intolerance. Reanalysis and the addition of more extensive trend data from 1940 to 1985 suggest that the shift *does* seem primarily to reflect increased tolerance of leftists, but that the public has *not* found other groups to be intolerant of. Measured tolerance has fluctuated greatly over the period, reflecting mainly changes in perceptions of threat from putatively subversive groups, especially domestic Communists. Also, the public's grasp of, and self-interested concern about, civil liberties seems so minimal that one might argue not that the public is substantially tolerant or intolerant, but that it has no really tangibly measurable "attitude" on the subject one way or the other.

Several recent studies have dealt with the American public's tolerance for dissent and nonconformity. Part of the discussion has revolved around the issue of changes in the level of tolerance—specifically, whether there has been an increase in this quality since the 1950s.

The benchmark for these studies has been Samuel A. Stouffer's classic study of civil liberties, published in 1955. Stouffer's survey posed an array of questions about Communists, Socialists, and atheists and sought to assess the public's willingness to allow such people to speak and to hold various kinds of jobs. Twenty years later, comparative data became available. In 1973, Stouffer's 1954 survey was substantially replicated, and, beginning in 1972, several of his central questions have been included on the General Social Survey of the National Opin-

JOHN MUELLER is Professor of Political Science at the University of Rochester. The author would like to thank J. Allen Williams, Tom Smith, and Howard Schuman for supplying some of the data used in this paper, Karl Mueller for research assistance, and George E. Marcus and John Zaller for comments on an earlier draft.

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ion Research Center. Analyses of these data have generally concluded that there has been a very substantial, broadly based increase in tolerance since 1954 in the American public (Cutler and Kaufman, 1975; Davis, 1975; Erskine and Siegel, 1975; Nunn, Crockett, and Williams, 1978; McClosky and Brill, 1983:434–438).

Challenging this central finding have been John Sullivan, James Piereson, and George Marcus. First in an essay in a popular magazine, then in an article in a scholarly journal, then in a book, they argue that these supposed increases in political tolerance were "illusory" (1979a, 1979b, 1982). Instead, they assert, "claims that the public is now more tolerant than in the 1950s are either untrue or greatly exaggerated" (1982:250; see also pp. 67n, 70, 77, 82). They concede that "attitudes toward Communists, socialists, and atheists are now more favorable," but suggest that "citizens are now able to point to other political groups toward which they feel more hostility" (1982:77, 69).

To test this notion, they devised a "content-controlled" measure of tolerance and applied it on a national survey in 1978. Respondents were handed a card listing ten groups, including not only those Stouffer asked about, like Communists and atheists, but also an anarchic terrorist group (the Symbionese Liberation Army), an extreme black nationalist group (the Black Panthers), and three right wing groups: the Ku Klux Klan, the John Birch Society, and "fascists."[1] After the respondents had selected their "least-liked group" from this array, they were asked several questions about tolerating that group, and it was found that tolerance so measured was lower than that obtained by the direct Stouffer questions.

This paper seeks to reassess this debate over trends in tolerance. It recalculates the 1954 Stouffer measures to partially simulate the Sullivan least-liked group question, reevaluates the full response cadences obtained by the least-liked group question, compares the two, and concludes that, when so measured, increases in tolerance from the 1950s are still remarkably significant even when the Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus assertions are taken into account.

Then, however, an effort is made to get a richer perspective on trends in political tolerance by bringing in additional poll data covering the period from the early 1940s to the mid-1980s. It is concluded, in agreement with Sullivan and his colleagues, that measured shifts reflect declines in specific intolerance toward Communists. However, in disagreement with them, it is argued that the public has *not* redirected its intolerance to other groups, since none poses the threat Communists were perceived to pose in the 1950s. Should such a group arise, it is to be expected that high levels of intolerance would once again be found.

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[1] This list changes the rules of the game somewhat. Although the Communist party is often accused of being violence-prone and terroristic at base, it adopts much of the usual trappings of a legitimate political party and is accepted by many as such. The Symbionese Liberation Army (the least-liked group for 8% of the respondents) never had any such pretensions—violence and terror were its regular course of business—and by almost any democratic theory it is criminal and outside the bounds of legitimate political discourse. To a considerable degree, the same can be said for the Ku Klux Klan (24%) and for the Black Panthers (6%) in some of their incarnations. (For related criticisms, see McClosky and Brill, 1983:435–436n; and Caspi and Seligson, 1983:396–397.)

The paper discusses the considerable fluctuations in measured tolerance that have occurred over the last half century, and it concludes with some comments about the degree to which the public can be said to be whimsical in its approach to the issue of civil liberties. Although the public seems able to react to news events in a predictable manner, it may be most useful to conclude that no meaningfully measurable attitude on tolerance exists.

The Stouffer Shift

Although the Sullivan survey sought, in part, to be comparable to the Stouffer survey, only two of the Sullivan questions about the respondents' least-liked group actually are meaningfully comparable to the Stouffer items. One of these, a question asking whether members of the least-liked group "should be allowed to make a speech in this city," is quite directly comparable. The other asks whether members of the least-liked group "should be allowed to teach in public schools." When asking about Communists, Stouffer asked whether they should be *fired* from teaching in a *college*. The differences are troublesome but, fortunately, various comparisons possible with the Stouffer data suggest they are probably not too significant (see also Abramson, 1983:257n).

The data for Stouffer's questions are given in Table 1. A shift is evident. Between 1954 and 1972 or 1973, there was an increase of between 24 and 33 percentage points in tolerance as measured by these two questions and a decrease of between 23 and 34 percentage points in intolerance. Of interest, and of later relevance, is the fact that while substantial shifts are documented on the questions during the 18 years between 1954 and 1972, there has been no clear further liberalization in the 13 years since then on the speech question. There is a possible 10 percentage point liberalization on the teaching question between 1972 and 1985—but only if one ignores the 1973 and 1974 figures. During the 1972–1985 period NORC also asked about tolerance of atheists, rac-

Table 1. Trends in the Stouffer Questions, 1954–1985

	Communist Should Be Allowed to Speak			Communist Teacher Should Be Fired		
	Yes	No	DK,NA	Yes	No	DK,NA
1954	27%	68	5	89%	6	5
1972	52%	45	4	61%	32	7
1973	60%	38	2	55%	39	6
1973N	53%	42	6	63%	30	7
1974	58%	39	3	52%	42	6
1976	55%	43	2	54%	41	5
1977	55%	42	2	57%	39	4
1978S	60%	36	4			
1980	55%	42	3	53%	41	6
1982	56%	41	3	50%	43	6
1984	59%	38	3	49%	46	5
1985	57%	40	3	51%	44	4

SOURCES: 1954—Stouffer, 1955. 1973N—Nunn, Crockett, and Williams, 1978; personal communication with J. Allen Williams, 1983. 1978S—Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus, 1982. All other years—General Social Survey data files, NORC.

QUESTIONS: Now I should (would) like to ask you some questions about a man who admits he is a Communist. Suppose this admitted Communist wanted (wants) to make a speech in your community. Should he be allowed to speak, or not? Suppose he is teaching in a college. Should he be fired, or not?

ists, antidemocratic militarists, and homosexuals. For the most part results on these questions also varied little over the period.[2]

The Least-Liked Group Shift

A problem in trying to compare the least-liked group questions asked by Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus in 1978 with the 1954 Stouffer questions in Table 1 is that the comparison assumes everyone in 1954 would have selected admitted Communists as their least-liked group had they been presented with a list of groups like the one used by Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus in 1978. In arguing there has been "little if any" change in tolerance since the 1950s, Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus compare the results of their least-liked group question with those obtained by Stouffer when he asked about admitted Communists. But while it may well be the case that Communists were the least-liked group for most people in 1954 (as they were in 1978—see Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus, 1982:86), there were doubtless many among the 1954 population who, if given a choice, would have said they liked some other group even less—fascists or the Ku Klux Klan, for example—and some of these would probably have been willing to suppress the speech of those groups even while advocating free speech for Communists. Thus in comparison to the Sullivan approach, the Stouffer measure *overstates* the tolerance levels of 1954.[3]

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[2] NORC asked whether members of each of the five groups should be allowed to speak, to teach college, and to have a book in the public library. For atheists there was no change on the speech and book questions, and a 4 or 5 percentage point liberalization on the teaching question. For people who believe that "blacks are genetically inferior," there was no change on the teaching or book questions, and an *il*liberalization of a few percentage points on the speaking question. For people who advocate eliminating elections and "letting the military run the country," there was no change on the speech and book questions, and a possible 2 or 3 percentage point liberalization on the teaching questions. For homosexuals there was no change on the book question, a 5 percentage point liberalization on the speech question, and a 10 percentage point liberalization on the teaching question. The data for the speech and teaching questions for admitted Communists are given in Table 1; on the book question there was no change.

Unfortunately Stouffer did not ask about tolerating right wing groups, but he did ask about several groups besides admitted Communists: atheists, Socialists, and alleged Communists. A closer approximation to the Sullivan question can therefore be generated by retabulating the Stouffer data to derive the number who would be intolerant of *any* of these four groups. When that is done, the measured tolerance of 1954 shifts downward. While 27% of the 1954 population would allow Communists to speak, only 19% would allow all four groups to speak; and while 68% would cut off the speech of Communists, fully 81% would do so for at least one of the four groups. As for the teaching question, the already low 6% tolerance level declines to 4%, while the portion in favor of firing rises from 89% to 95%. These changes, reported in the first two columns of Table 2, are caused overwhelmingly by people who would tolerate Communists but not atheists.

It should be observed that these figures *still* overestimate the amount of tolerance abroad in the land in 1954. Some of those tolerant of all four groups might be willing to cut off the liberties of the kinds of right wing and terrorist groups asked about in the 1978 Sullivan survey.

Another underappreciated difference between the Stouffer and the Sullivan civil liberties questions concerns the response options. Rather than simply asking the respondents whether they would allow free speech or not, Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus gave their respondents a card with five response categories, one which was comparatively encouraging about an "uncertain" option; then they were asked "tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, *are uncertain,* disagree, or strongly

---

[3] Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus evidence an awareness of this problem (1982:32, 39).

Table 2. Willingness to Allow Groups to Speak or Teach, 1954 and 1978

	Stouffer, 1954		Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus, 1978	
	Communists	Communists, Atheists, Alleged Communists, and Socialists	Least-Liked Group (% of All Respondents)	Least-Liked Group (% of Respondents Questioned)
Speak				
Allow	27%	19%	50%	55%
No opinion/uncertain	5	1	7	7
Not allow	68	81	34	37
Teach				
Allow	6%	4%	19%	20%
No opinion/uncertain	5	1	10	11
Not allow	89	95	62	68

disagree" (emphasis added). By contrast, a respondent on Stouffer's survey would have to volunteer a no opinion response. Thus, on the Sullivan formulation, measured uncertainty will be higher and therefore *both* measured tolerance *and* intolerance will be lower.

A third incomparability arises from the fact that fully 10% of the respondents in the Sullivan survey were unable or unwilling to select a least-liked group, and these people were accordingly not asked the tolerance questions. Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus included these people in the base when they calculated their percentages for the tolerance questions with the result that both tolerance and intolerance, as measured, would be further reduced.

As it happens, Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus report only the percentage measured tolerant on the two crucial questions from their 1978 survey—a figure which, as indicated, will be twice deflated. When one looks at the entire array of results, as in Table 2, an interesting picture emerges.

On the speech question, Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus argue that measured tolerance rose from 27% to 50% (compare columns 1 and 3 in Table 2), an increase smaller than those found on the Stouffer questions—though not, as Abramson (1980) has observed, very much smaller. However, one could, with equal validity, compare the not allow/intolerance figures from those same questions and observe that intolerance declined from 68% to 34%, a drop as large as any found on the Stouffer comparisons. Moreover, a comparison of the four-group combination (which, as noted, *still* overstates the amount of tolerance in the 1954 public) with the Sullivan formulation shows a 31 percentage point rise (from 19% to 50%) in tolerance and a 47 percentage point decrease (from 81% to 34%) in intolerance. A fairer and more straightforward approach would be to eliminate those who were never asked the civil liberties questions in 1978 because they said they had no least-liked group. When this is done (in the last column of Table 2), changes in attitude at least as significant as those found with the straight Stouffer comparisons of Table 1 still prevail. Finally, if one were to reapportion the 17% of the respondents with no opinion or with no least-liked group in some reasonable manner, a substantial shift in tolerance would still be found.

The same sort of analysis is applied to the teaching question in the bottom half of Table 2, and here Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus are on somewhat stronger ground. They report the top figure in the first and third columns, and conclude tolerance has increased only 13 percentage points, from 6% to 19%. However, it would be equally valid to report the results for the other part of the question and conclude intolerance has dropped 27 percentage points—in line with the 32 or 33 percentage point change found with the Stouffer question (1954 vs.

1978 in Table 1). Removing or reapportioning the respondents with no opinion or with no least-liked group would yield a tolerance shift smaller than the one found by the Stouffer measures, but this procedure would still clearly suggest a solid increase in political tolerance since the 1950s.

Trends in Tolerance

Thus there was a marked increase in political tolerance between 1954 and the 1970s even taking the Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus critique into account. To evaluate this shift more fully, it would be useful to place it in broader historical context. Tables 3, 4, and 5 supply some of this context.

Table 3. Trends in Support for Radio Speeches by Communists

A. Do you think Communist Party candidates should be allowed any time on the radio?

	Yes	No	No Opinion
Sep 1940	32%	55	13

B. In peacetime, do you think members of the Communist Party in this country should be allowed to speak on the radio?

	Yes	Yes Qualified	No	Undecided
Nov 1943	48%		40	12
Nov 1945	48%		39	13
Mar 1946[a]	45%		44	11
Apr 1948	36%		57	7
Nov 1953[a]	19%	9	68	4
Jan 1954[a]	14%	8	73	5
Jan 1956[a]	16%	6	76	3
Dec 1956[a]	20%	4	72	4
Apr 1957[a]	17%	5	75	3
Nov 1963[a]	18%	10	67	5

SOURCES: Roper Center; NORC codebooks; *Opinion News*, 15 September 1948, p. 11; Hyman and Sheatsley, 1953:8; Gallup, 1972:245.

[a] Question did not include the words "In peacetime."

Table 3B displays the results of one important series resulting from a question about allowing Communists to speak on the radio that was asked irregularly between 1943 and 1963. It turns out that during World War II considerable numbers of people said they would allow Communists to speak freely during peacetime; this level of tolerance for Communist speeches on the radio, in fact, was almost as high as tolerance for Communist speeches in the community in the 1970s (compare Table 1) when some allowance is made for different levels of no opinion response.[4] Of course, during the war the Soviets and domestic Communists were often seen as noble and heroic allies against Nazi Germany. Following the war there was a noticeable, but not precipitous, decline in tolerance which eventually bottomed out in the mid-1950s. These low levels of tolerance generally held through late 1963 when the question was last asked. This declining trend in tolerance between the 1940s and the 1950s is paralleled on other poll questions in which respondents were asked whether Socialists should be allowed to publish (Table 4A). More generally, there was also some decline in the percentage who would allow newspapers to criticize "our form of government" (Table 4B)—and possibly a decline in the percentage willing to allow people to "say anything" in a public speech (Table 4C).

While tolerance may have been relatively high during World War II, there is fragmentary evidence to suggest it was substantially lower just before the war in 1940. This can be concluded from the 1940 data in Table 3A, and also from the 1940 data in Table 5A, in which respondents were asked about allowing "speeches against democracy." In that year the Nazi–Soviet pact was in effect and the United States was in a kind of McCarthy era, except that the perceived threat to democracy came from two sources: the extreme left and the extreme right. The tolerance levels in 1940 for allowing antidemocratic speech making (Table 5A) and for letting Communists speak on the radio (Table 3A) are roughly similar to those measured by Stouffer in 1954 for Communist speech making (Table 1).

When the question in Table 5A was replicated in the 1970s, it generated results similar to those generated by the Stouffer question at that time (Table 1). Beyond that, the question comparison in Table 5 gives dramatic evidence about the importance of paying careful attention to question wording when dealing with civil liberties issues. Both in 1940 and in the replication in the 1970s, people were found to be far less willing to "forbid" speeches against democracy than they were to "not allow" them, an issue to be considered more fully below.

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[4] It should be stressed that all the data from the World War II period in Tables 3 and 4 are from questions in which the respondents were asked about allowing free speech *during peacetime*.

Table 4. Trends in Civil Liberties, 1943–1957

A. In peacetime, do you think the Socialist Party should be allowed to publish newspapers in this country?

	Yes	Yes Qualified	No	No Opinion
Nov 1943	57%		25	18
Nov 1945	58%		28	15
May 1953	45%	5	34	16
Jan 1954	41%	6	39	14
Jan 1956[a]	41%	6	40	13
Jan 1957[a]	47%	5	38	10
Apr 1957[a]	43%	5	39	13

B. In peacetime, do you think newspapers should be allowed to criticize our form of government?

	Yes	Yes Qualified	No	No Opinion
Nov 1943	66%		30	4
Nov 1945	64%		31	5
Apr 1948	70%		27	3
May 1953	54%	7	35	4

C. In peacetime, do you think people in this country should be allowed to say anything they want to in a public speech?

	Yes	Yes Qualified	No Qualified	No	No Opinion
Nov 1943	63%		32[b]	5	3
Nov 1945	64%			32	4
May 1953	53%	21		24	2
Nov 1954	56%	23		20	1

SOURCES: NORC codebooks; Erskine, 1970:486–487; Cantril and Strunk, 1951:245; Hyman and Sheatsley, 1953:15–16; Hyman, 1963:237.

NOTE: The "Yes qualified" answers include comments like "if fair," "if not Communist," "if not favoring violence," "if not treasonable," "if not libelous."

[a] Question did not include the words "In peacetime."

[b] Multiple answers accepted.

Table 5. The Forbid/Not Allow Questions

A. Do you think the United States should allow speeches against democracy?

	1940	Fall 1974	Feb 1976	Spring 1976
Yes, allow	21%	53%	50%	46%
No, not allow	62	42	42	42
Don't know	17	5	8	12

B. Do you think the United States should forbid speeches against democracy?

	1940	Fall 1974	Feb 1976	Spring 1976
No, don't forbid	39%	67%	75%	69%
Yes, forbid	46	26	19	19
Don't know	15	6	6	12

Sources: Rugg, 1941; Schuman and Presser, 1981:277; personal communication with Howard Schuman, 1983.

When the data from Tables 1, 3, 4, and 5 are combined into a single story, a pattern emerges that suggests a fair amount of fluctuation in attitudes toward free speech over a 45-year span. The pattern, in summary, is as follows:

1. In 1940, when internationally relevant subversive threats from right as well as left wing extremists were perceived, tolerance levels were probably quite low—almost as low as those registered during the McCarthy period (Tables 3A, 5A).

2. During World War II, the number of those who said they would tolerate Communist speech making during peacetime rose as the international entity to which the domestic party was linked became allied with the United States in a total war against a common enemy (Tables 3 and 4).[5]

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[5] Presumably, taking a leaf from the Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus argument, tolerance of Nazi or pro-Japanese speech at the time would have been found to be spectacularly less magnanimous had anybody bothered to ask about it. However, it seems likely that tolerance in general—that is, of the freedom to speak "against democracy" or to "say anything" (during peacetime)—*rose* between 1940 and the war years (compare the 1940 data in Table 5A with the 1943 data in Tables 4B and 4C).

3. After the war international Communism became a perceived threat as Cold War hostilities emerged and as various dramatic and highly publicized cases of Communist subversion, or alleged subversion, came to light: among them, the cases of Igor Gouzenko, Elizabeth Bentley, Klaus Fuchs, Alger Hiss, and Julius and Ethel Rosenberg. During this period, tolerance for Communist speech making eroded. Declining with it was tolerance for Socialist publication, and perhaps for the right to "say anything" and for newspapers to "criticize our form of government" (Tables 3 and 4).

4. These trends hit bottom in the 1950s with the Korean War and with the trial and execution of the Rosenbergs (1950–53); at this time the issue was extensively exploited by various politicians, of whom Joseph McCarthy is the best remembered (Tables 1, 3, and 4).

5. Tolerance of free speech for Communists remained at this low level at least until the end of 1963 (Table 3).

6. By 1972, tolerance for the civil liberties of Communists, Socialists, and atheists had risen sharply to levels comparable to those that prevailed during World War II (Table 1).

7. For the next 13 years tolerance for these groups and for other divergent groups has remained quite steady at this high level (Table 1 and note 2).

Explaining the Trends

This exercise in trend tracing suggests that there has been a considerable amount of fluctuation in political tolerance over the last half-century or so. Most of the measures involve free speech for Communists, but there are some data for other groups and for tolerance issues of a more general sort as well. Furthermore the measured upward shift in tolerance discussed so much in the literature occurred sometime during a relatively brief 8½-year period between late 1963 and spring 1972. These observations also suggest that it may be better to see the Stouffer shift of 1954–1972 not as a trend toward greater tolerance, but as a return to levels of tolerance that prevailed during World War II. What can explain this pattern? To approach this question, it would be useful to see if there are relevant trend lines that parallel the Stouffer pattern. In particular these trend lines should show (1) a substantial shift in opinion between the 1950s and the 1970s, and (2) little or only modest additional change during the 1970s and early 1980s.

Changes in educational or age levels. Although tolerance may be correlated with age and education, the Stouffer shift is not purely the result of changes in levels of education or in cohort shifts; if the shift occurred within 8½ years (rather than over 18 as is usually supposed) there was insufficient time for significant cohort changes to take place or for increased educational opportunities to have such substantial impact. This reasoning is in line with the analyses of Davis (1975), Cutler and Kaufman (1975), Nunn, Crockett, and Williams (1978), and Abramson (1983: chap. 14), which find the Stouffer shift (even assuming the change to have taken place over 18 years) to be significantly in excess of what could be explained by cohort or educational shifts, a conclusion also supported by Sullivan and his colleagues (1982: chap. 5). Also relevant are two observations: (1) tolerance levels have not increased much in the 13 years between 1972 and 1985, when any presumed cohort or educational change would have continued; and (2) tolerance levels *declined* between the early 1940s and the early 1950s even while education was expanding (on this point, see also Glazer and Lipset, 1955:151; and Stewart, 1967).

Changes in psychological factors. Several studies have linked political tolerance to various psychological factors such as optimism, self-esteem, rigidity, and dogmatism (see Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus, 1982: chap. 6; Zalkind, Gaugler, and Schwartz, 1975; Sniderman, 1975). These relationships seem valid, but insofar as data are available they do not seem to account for the Stouffer shift, since patterns on these psychological dimensions mostly either have not changed since the 1950s or have changed modestly in the wrong direction. Thus Nunn, Crockett, and Williams found no significant change from 1954 in the degree to which Americans were optimistic about their personal future or were more worried about "things" (1978:27–28.) In a more extensive analysis of these issues, Lipset and Schneider conclude that there have been no important shifts since the 1950s and early 1960s in the degree to which Americans feel happy, personally satisfied, or personally optimistic; if anything, there was a mild *decline* in their good feelings on these issues (1983:111–155). Moreover, there was a modest decline in the degree of personal trust among the American public while the sense of alienation has increased somewhat (Lipset and Schneider, 1983:109–111; see also Smith, 1980:219; Wright, 1976: chap. 7).[6]

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[6] Stouffer included a few personality items on his survey, and four were replicated on the Nunn survey in 1973. It was found that the percentage agreeing that "Any leader should be strict with people under him in order to gain their respect" declined only 3 points, while the percentage agreeing that "People can be divided into two classes—the weak and the strong" declined 8 points. For what it's worth, larger changes were found in two questions about child rearing: agreement with the statement "A child should never be allowed to talk back to parents, or else he will lose respect for them" declined 14 points, and those agreeing that "If a child is unusual in some way, his parents should get him to be more like other children" declined 38 points (Stouffer codebook; personal communication with J. Allen Williams, 1983).

Changes in political efficacy and trust. As for measures of more specifically political attitudes, Lipset and Schneider document several trends in the direction opposite to the tolerance trend: the sense of political efficacy lessened somewhat between the 1950s and the 1970s, and there were marked declines in the degree to which Americans trusted the government, valued the performance of the government and the behavior of public officials, and expressed confidence in the leaders not only of Congress and the executive branch, but also in those of medicine, education, organized religion, the courts, business, labor, the press, the military, and the Supreme Court (1983:19–61).

Changes in attitudes on relevent political issues. Trends on two specific political issues might be expected to have some resonance with political tolerance. Neither does. One is civil rights. Since the 1950s and early 1960s there has clearly been a substantial liberalization of attitudes toward racial integration, particularly toward the principles of equal treatment. However, unlike attitudes on political tolerance, this liberalization trend generally *continued* through the 1970s rather than reaching a plateau (Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo, 1985; see also Taylor, Sheatsley, and Greeley, 1978; Smith, 1980:162–174; Smith and Sheatsley, 1984; and a Harris Survey release, 18 February 1985). The other concerns criminal justice. In this area there has been a considerable *deliberalization:* in the 1970s, people became far more likely to advocate the death penalty and to feel the courts are insufficiently harsh on criminals. Not irrelevantly, they were also found to be increasingly fearful of walking near their homes alone at night (Smith, 1980:18–19, 41–42, 52–53).

Changes in international attitudes. Other potentially relevant questions deal with the Cold War and with attitudes toward the Soviet Union. There was a big change in this between the 1950s and the 1970s; for example, Americans tended to rate Russia around 85%–91% unfavorable in the 1950s, while far fewer people were so negative in the 1970s. However, unlike the tolerance questions, questions like this were remarkably volatile in the 1970s: the portion unfavorably inclined varied actively between 30% and 73% during the 1972–1982 decade, while the portion finding Communism to be the "worst kind" of government rose substantially during the decade, from 44% to 61% (Smith, 1983:280–281; Russett and Deluca, 1981:389–391).

Changes in concern about domestic Communism. Although data are not as abundant as one might like, the questions which do seem to show the proper patterns are those dealing with concern over domestic Communism. In Stouffer's 1954 survey 81% felt American Communists to be of very great, great, or some danger to the country; in a replication in 1974 this dropped to 65%, a figure which held firm at least through 1976 (Smith, 1983:289). In 1954, 35% claimed they had recently talked with friends or relatives about "Communists in the United States"; in 1973 that figure was 16% (Nunn, Crockett, and Williams, 1978:30).[7] In replicating three Stouffer items in 1973, Nunn, Crockett, and Williams found 20% calling Communists in government a "great danger" where Stouffer had found 33% expressing this degree of alarm; for Communists in defense plants the decline was from 39% to 21%; for Communists in college teaching, however, the decline was smaller—from 32% to 26%—even though the data in Table 1 show the public to have become far less willing to fire Communist teachers (Stouffer codebook; personal communication with J. Allen Williams, 1983).

What happened sometime during the late 1960s and early 1970s, then, was a notable decline in concern over domestic Communism, and this seems to be related to an increased willingness to tolerate Communist expression, even as the increased concern over subversion by domestic Communists presumably led to a decreased tolerance in the decade after World War II. This observation accords well with common sense—it was during the late 1960s and early 1970s that various anti-Communist measures adopted in the McCarthy era were calmly dismantled by the courts and Congress to remarkably little protest. As concern diminished, tolerance for Communist speech rose, apparently to a sort of plateau at about the level achieved during World War II when domestic Communism also seemed relatively benign. It has remained at that level ever since.

The data in Table 6 help to illustrate these trends. They reflect the amount of press attention given domestic Communism over the last 45 years. Substantial attention in the immediate prewar years dwindled during the war to almost nothing. A crescendo after 1945 peaked between 1950 (the year of Korea and the McCarran Act) and 1954, McCarthy's (and Stouffer's) year of maximum attention. The table also documents the oft-forgotten fact that substantial press attention to the issue (reflecting in part various anti-Communist crusading movements of the time) lasted until well into the 1960s. Finally, attention plummeted in the late 1960s to levels not seen since 1943; so when researchers again turned their attention to civil liberties attitudes in 1972, domestic Communism had become one of the great nonissues of American politics.[8]

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[7] Actually, the difference is probably even greater. Stouffer asked if these conversations had occurred "in the last week or so"; Nunn, Crockett, and Williams asked about "the last few weeks or so." Both numbers seem unrealistically high.

[8] It does not seem possible to determine exactly when in the period between the early 1960s and 1972 the shift took place, but some evidence suggests it may have been mostly concentrated in the early 1970s. A survey in 1965 found 89% feeling that members of the Communist party do more harm than good to "American life"; in 1969 this still held at

Table 6. Items in the Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature

	Communism–US	Communist Party–US		Communism–US	Communist Party–US
1940	26	16	1963	7	5
1941	38	11	1964	14	9
1942	12	2	1965	20	9
1943	2	6	1966	10	8
1944	10	6	1967	10	4
1945	9	8	1968	6	4
1946	16	14	1969	3	4
1947	58	17	1970	5	2
1948	62	21	1971	1	3
1949	73	18	1972	0	1
1950	146	12	1973	0	5
1951	58	29	1974	0	1
1952	80	7	1975	0	2
1953	144	15	1976	0	0
1954	170	33	1977	0	2
1955	86	21	1978	0	2
1956	23	32	1979	0	0
1957	29	34	1980	0	5
1958	19	6	1981	0	4
1959	27	11	1982	0	3
1960	25	3	1983	0	5
1961	37	15	1984	0	3
1962	30	9	1985	1	0

To a degree these observations applying comparisons in trend data are in agreement with the conclusion of Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus, who mostly rely on the analysis of a single survey: "tolerance . . . of communists has increased primarily because they are not perceived as less dangerous and threatening than they were in the 1950s" (1979b:789). One of the factors they find "most strongly and consis-

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85%, but by 1973 it had dropped to 72% (Erskine and Siegel, 1975:26). Some fragmentary additional evidence can be arrayed. On national surveys conducted in 1970, some rather strongly intolerant opinion was voiced: 52% would ban "newspapers which preach revolution" (Erskine and Siegel, 1975:25), while 53% would not allow "books attacking our system of government" and 62% would not allow "speeches against God" (Wilson, 1975:71). Variations in question wording make comparison exceedingly difficult, but these numbers do seem quite high compared to the 1972 figures in Table 1 and thus suggest a considerable shift in the 1970–72 period. See also Jennings and Niemi, 1981:414.

tently related to tolerance'' is ''perceptions of threat'': ''the greater the perceived threat from a group, the more likely a person is to be intolerant of the group'' (1982:251).[9] However, the method Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus use to arrive at this conclusion is less than convincing. They measure perceived threat not with direct questions on the issue, but by a scale derived from a factor analysis of responses to adjective pairs that respondents were asked to use to describe their least-liked group. One of the six pairs on this scale, safe/dangerous, may reflect threat, as perhaps does nonviolent/violent. But the others were honest/dishonest, trustworthy/untrustworthy, predictable/unpredictable, and good/bad.[10] Why this scale is said to be a specific measure of ''perceived threat'' rather than, say, ''perceived badness,'' is far from clear. Though threat may be part of the mix, the variable seems essentially to measure degree of dislike, and to find that it correlates tenaciously with intolerance (those who most dislike a disliked group are also most likely to be intolerant of it) is not very surprising.

However, although the Sullivan study uses a dubious method for measuring threat, the trend parallels explored here do suggest that its conclusion about the importance of perceived threat is very likely to be sound. On the other hand, this analysis parts company with Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus when they argue that ''citizens are now able to point to other political groups toward which they feel more hostility, and which they regard as more threatening'' (1982:69), or when they assert that intolerance has ''merely been turned toward new targets'' (1979b:792). It seems, rather, that intolerance has *not* been retargeted. Essentially, the argument seems to assume that Americans have a certain bundle of intolerance to distribute; if the targets of that intolerance cease to be threatening enough to deserve their intolerance, people will shop around for other targets on which to vent their intolerance. The analysis here, by contrast, suggests that that intolerance can fade with the threat unless some other similarly threatening group emerges to fill the vacuum.[11] No groups currently fill this bill—not even those asked about on the Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus study's list. And thus intolerance has declined since the 1950s—though the potential for its reemergence is always there.

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[9] Stouffer observed the same thing, though he found it ''far from a 1-to-1 relationship'' (1955: chap. 8).

[10] See Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus, 1982:187–194. All six pairs weighed in at about the same level on the factor except for the ''predictable/unpredictable'' item, which had a lower loading.

[11] This suggests that Stouffer may have been a bit too concerned when he concluded that intolerance may be too ''deeply rooted'' to be ''responsive to a merely *negative* information program which minimizes the Communist risk, even if the facts should justify such an interpretation of the risk'' (1955:193, emphasis in the original).

Conclusions and Speculations

Although hatred and perceptions of threat may never be entirely separable, it seems useful to differentiate two kinds of intolerance. On the one hand, one can be intolerant out of hatred or simply because one doesn't want to hear certain things—that some races are inferior, for example, or that America is rotten or that God is dead or that Hitler was a saint. On the other hand, one can be intolerant because one believes an undesirable group to be a potential practical risk; the most dangerous would be a subversive group allied with a foreign power whose goal is to undermine the government.

The only significant groups in recent decades which fit the second category have been the American Nazi party, the American Communist party (and, for some, domestic Japanese during World War II), and any groups seen to be close allies of these. The Nazis ceased to be a realistic threat in 1945 when their foreign ally was defeated, and the evidence suggests that the fear of domestic Communism waned substantially after the 1950s, leading, sensibly enough, to an increase in tolerance. No foreign-related groups of that sort have emerged toward which one can redirect one's fear-induced intolerance.[12]

This dynamic seems to be the dominating one in tolerance levels as usually measured in the polls. As the fear of Communism has waxed and waned, not only has tolerance of domestic Communists changed, but tolerance of other political groups like Socialists (seen to be associated by the public) has apparently been swept along. It may even be that agreement with certain somewhat general democratic principles follows as part of the package, though evidence on this is extremely fragmentary.[13] But it does seem that attitudes on tolerance move in packs or clusters. As fear of a putatively subversive group changes, attitudes about tolerating that group change in consonance, and tolerance levels for associated, but nonsubversive, groups are carried along with it. An analogy can be found in the study by Lipset and Schneider of the "confidence gap." They document a decline in the last two decades in confidence in institutions and in the people running them, and trace this loss of confidence to events like Vietnam, Watergate, racial difficulties, and, later, to the lackluster performance of the economy. Yet the decline in confidence is universal: it is directed not only at the presumably blameworthy leaders and institutions in politics, the military, and business, but also at such (comparative) innocents as educators, religious figures, the press, and medicine (1983: chap. 2). The phenomenon is a sort of public-opinion fellow traveling: ritualistic, considerably indiscriminate, and quite unfair.[14]

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[12] To a degree, the relative intolerance of the early 1950s might be seen as a sort of induced war situation. During war, civil liberties concerning the enemy are often substantially curtailed, and in the Korean War years many felt the United Stated was in, or nearly in, World War III. Fear of war with the Soviet Union and (therefore) of its domestic subversive ally continued into the 1960s, until the mellowing of the Cold War (see Mueller, 1973: chap. 3, 1977, 1979).

[13] As noted earlier, general acceptance of free speech and free press seems to have risen between 1940 and the war years (note 5), then perhaps to have declined in the 1950s (Table 4). Then the Nunn replication of the Stouffer study in 1973 found an increase from 32% to 70% in those agreeing that it is important "to protect the rights of innocent people even if some Communists are not found out" (Stouffer codebooks; personal communication with J. Allen Williams, 1983). There also appears to have been a simultaneous liberalization of opinion on another issue: "Any person who hides behind the laws when he is questioned about his activities doesn't deserve much consideration" apparently found notably less agreement in 1978 than in 1958, though other such "principles of democracy" do not show much change (Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus, 1982:203).

As Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus have carefully and thoughtfully noted, it should not be assumed attitudes measured on polls necessarily predict or even reflect behavior (1982:49–50, 251; see also Lawrence, 1976; Zellman, 1975; Gibson and Bingham, 1982). For example, people who say that atheists should be forbidden to speak may not be moved to do anything about it should such speeches be announced. But if this point is going to be made, it does not seem reasonable to conclude with Sullivan and his colleagues that "most Americans are intolerant of some groups" (1982:252). If Americans (1) say they support free speech, (2) say they would deny this freedom to certain groups, but (3) do nothing to prevent these groups from speaking (beyond negative mutterings when queried about it in public opinion surveys), then it seems fairest to say that their behavior is best predicted by their verbal support of the principle of free speech, and thus that they are overwhelmingly tolerant (on this point, see also Glazer and Lipset, 1955:143).

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[14] That there may have been at least some increase in tolerance since the 1950s not linked to changed fear of domestic Communism is suggested by statistics about atheists: tolerance for them has gone up nearly 30 percentage points, as much as for Communists. Some of this may be due to the fact that religion has waned somewhat as a force since the 1950s (Nunn, Crockett, and Williams, 1978:127–139), so there may be a specific mellowing of anti-atheistic feeling separate from, but parallel to, the decline in urgent anti-Communism.

However, there is a problem in assessing this issue because Stouffer asked about "people whose ideas are considered bad or dangerous by other people. For instance, somebody who is against all churches and religion" (for an interesting dissection of this question, see Schuman and Presser, 1981:289–292). He wasn't asking so much about an atheist as about a religion-threatener, and for many people that may sound a lot like a Communist. Indeed, when he asked, "What things do Communists believe in?" the most common single response (24%) was that they were "against religion" (1955:166). Moreover, Stouffer asked the atheist questions well before he asked about Communists, and so a distinction between the two would not have been suggested to the respondents. That "religion-threateners" are substantially less desirable than "atheists" is suggested by some evidence from the Sullivan study: only 15% selected atheists as their first or second least-liked group, while fully 48% chose Communists (1982:86), yet people were almost as willing in later questions to restrict the freedom of religion-threateners as they were that of Communists.

This problem is certainly confounding, but it may not be devastating. Gallup has asked several times about voting for an atheist for president, and those favorable rose from 18% in 1958 to 40% in 1978 and 42% in 1983 (*Gallup Report*, September 1983, p. 13). Thus substantially increased tolerance for "atheists" as well as "religion-threateners" does seem to be documented. However, if there is an upward trend for atheists separate from those that cluster around the Communist issue, it is odd that there has been little or no further movement in the trend since 1972 (see note 2). Real independence should be made of sterner stuff.

It might be useful to push this consideration one step further. In some respects it seems that the data not only fail to reflect behavior, they also fail to reflect *attitude* very well. Or, to put it directly, on questions of tolerance and civil liberties—that is, on some of the basic issues on which the theory of democracy is founded—it may be most useful for some purposes to assume that no attitude worthy of the name exists (see also Converse, 1964, 1970). Rather than concluding that "most people are intolerant," it may be best to conclude that most people have no attitude on this issue that is meaningfully measureable by public opinion polls.

Consider, first of all, the data in Table 5. Measured "opinion" on a central question about free speech has repeatedly been manipulated by some 20 or 25 percentage points by merely altering the tone of the question.[15]

A second area concerns data about attitude consistency. Much research has shown that survey respondents overwhelmingly voice agreement with statements stating democratic principles but then calmly refuse to grant these rights to noncentrist groups (Prothro and Grigg, 1960; McClosky, Hoffman, and O'Hara, 1960; McClosky, 1964). Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus stress that abstract principles and specific applications may often "bring into play competing values" and thus seeming inconsistencies are not necessarily all that unreasonable (1982:36–43; see also McClosky and Brill, 1983:431–434). This is a most useful observation, but even taking this caveat into account, there is still a great deal of data that seems quite startling. For example, the Sullivan survey found 85% in agreement with the statement "I believe in free speech for all no matter what their views might be"; yet on the *very next question* only 63% said they would allow a person to make a speech against churches and religion. It is difficult to avoid the suspicion that the "principles of democracy" so queried about are, for many, just so many civics lesson platitudes, barren of tangible content. A survey in an Orwellian world could be expected to find principles like "slavery is freedom" as emptily and mechanically accepted.

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[15] In further experiments on this question Schuman and Presser find that when the vague "speeches against democracy" is replaced by the somewhat more specific "speeches in favor of Communism," the forbid/not allow difference remains, though lessened somewhat. However, when the question asks about things much closer to everyday humdrum reality (showing X-rated movies, advertising cigarettes on television), the forbid/not allow difference is reduced substantially (1981:276–283; see also Hippler and Schwarz, 1986).

Then there is the fact that even in the McCarthy-free 1970s and 1980s, surveys have repeatedly found that over 20% of the public says they are unwilling to allow any given unorthodox group the right to speak, even when that group is as politically benign as homosexuals, people who advocate government ownership of industry and the railroads, or people whose loyalty has been questioned but deny this under oath.[16] A fair interpretation of these data, of course, would be that there is an irreducible minimum of resentment and intolerance toward any given off-center group, but the data also foster the suspicion that there is in the response to such questions a certain amount of casual caprice and amiable randomness.

Finally there is Stouffer's odd finding in the depths (or heights) of the McCarthy era that his respondents seemed to be utterly unworried either about Communism or about threats to civil liberties. Asked "What kinds of things worry you most?" less than 1% mentioned either the threat of domestic Communism or concern about civil liberties. Even when specifically asked for their worries about "political or world problems," only 6% mentioned the Communist threat and only 2% mentioned concerns about civil liberties (1955:59–70). Then when Stouffer asked "Do you happen to know the names of any of the Senators or Congressmen" taking "a leading part" in "investigations of Communism," 30% could come up with no names, and only 13% volunteered the name of more than one.[17] In a Gallup poll of March 1952 (AIPO 488), respondents were asked what they worried about. So few mentioned domestic Communism that no coding category includes that worry. When they were asked what they wanted presidential candidates to talk about that year, less than 2% mentioned domestic Communism. When asked what they hoped the next president would do "to help you or people like yourself," less than 2% mentioned Communism. When asked for "some of the things" the president should do "for the good of the country," 4% included Communism in their list. However, when they were actually given a prepared list of "things the next president may try to do" and asked to choose two or three that "would be best for you," 36% managed to select "clean out Communism in the country."

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[16] For example, in 1954 about 20% of the population would have an accused Communist fired from a defense job, fired from teaching college or high school, forbidden to speak, and would remove his book from the public library; when Nunn, Crockett, and Williams replicated these questions in 1973, almost exactly the same results were obtained.

[17] Despite the existence of well-established data like these, commentators are *still* fond of using the word "hysteria" when referring to the McCarthy era.

Although there are other areas in which the polls show opinion to be quite volatile, it certainly seems from these considerations that the issue of civil liberties is one that enjoys little salience—it almost seems that the only time many people consider the subject is when they are being queried about it in public opinion surveys. And perhaps this is quite understandable. Intellectuals who study tolerance and civil liberties have a strong interest in free inquiry, as do members of the democratic political elite, who may conclude that free speech helps preserve their right to speak their minds when out of power. But unlike these minorities, most people never say anything that anyone else—even the most paranoid of dictators—would want to suppress.[18]

To be sure, the polls are measuring *something* when they ask about civil liberties, and the results do seem to hang together pretty well. As demonstrated above, trends in tolerance for Communist speech do follow patterns that make sense in general: people picked up the cues (domestic Communists are threatening, domestic Communists are not so threatening) and were able to deduce the current correct response to feed back to the interviewers.[19] And some other comfortable regularities have been noted in the literature—the tendency for the well-educated to be more tolerant, for example, and for the more-threatened to be less tolerant. But the polls also suggest that it may be far too grand and generous to believe there is anything like a real, tangible "attitude about" or "commitment to" or "hostility toward" civil liberties one way or the other. Even a word like "apathy," as suggested by Prothro and Grigg (1960) and McClosky (1964:374–376), may be too strong when referring to public opinion in this area, since it implies people have attitudes even if they fail to act on them. Indeed, the notion that an effective, mob-like "tyranny of the majority" could actually coalesce on civil liberties issues may well need reexamination. More to be feared is a tyranny of a few who obtain bland acquiescence from the uninterested, and essentially unaffected, many.

[18] Of the 13% who told Stouffer in 1954 that they felt less free to speak their minds than they used to, almost half said "this does not bother me." Bizarrely, in the Nunn, Crockett, and Williams replication of 1973, 20% (*more* than in 1954) said they felt less free to speak their minds than they used to.

[19] Other countries show shifts on such matters that are truly massive. Hitler seems to have had a fair amount of popular support while in power, but when his brutal, totalitarian regime was abruptly replaced by a democracy, the same people now found they could get along quite well in this new form of government. Spain and Portugal form more recent examples, while Czechoslovakia (1948) and Chile may furnish examples of shifts in the opposite direction. It is the message of the classic film documentary *The Sorrow and the Pity* that most of the French population adjusted comfortably to German occupation during World War II. When popular opposition to a suppressive government does boil up (as in contemporary Poland) the opposition seems far more likely to be motivated by economics, religion, ethnicity, or nationalism than by concerns over civil liberties. For comparative studies of civil liberties attitudes, see Caspi and Seligson, 1983; Muller, Personen, and Jukam, 1980; Shamir and Sullivan, 1983.

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A NOTE ON "TRENDS IN POLITICAL TOLERANCE"

JOHN L. SULLIVAN AND
GEORGE E. MARCUS

John Mueller has argued that attitudes toward political rights for Communists, examined over the historical period from the 1950s to the 1970s, contradicts our conclusion that levels of tolerance have probably not changed a great deal. He suggests that our content-controlled results are not well suited to support our conclusions. We relied on the content-controlled measurement strategy because the conceptualization of political tolerance that we found most apt postulates that questions of tolerance do not come into play unless one seriously objects to a political group (Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus, 1982:2–10). An individual's attitudes toward the civil liberties of a particular political group can reflect actual support of that group (a positive predisposition toward the group and its ideas) or indifference (including "not caring much one way or the other") as well as the more commonly analyzed responses of tolerance and intolerance.

Our conceptualization of tolerance dictated that tolerance is only at issue for someone in the presence of serious dislike and objection. We therefore used the content-controlled strategy to take account of the expectation that one particular stimulus group would not (indeed could not) provide the same test of political tolerance for all respondents. Attitudes toward each group could, in theory, vary from strongly positive through neutral to strongly negative. Given the kinds of groups we and others studied in most instances, these attitudes would tend to range from indifference through dislike. The point here is that the meaning of our results must be understood within the framework of our conceptualization of tolerance. As a result, our findings are not easily compared with those derived from either a different conceptualization of political tolerance, or in the case of much empirical research, in the absence of an explicit conceptualization of tolerance.

JOHN L. SULLIVAN is Professor of Political Science at the University of Minnesota. GEORGE E. MARCUS is Professor of Political Science at Williams College.

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Our own discussion of the meaning of tolerance led to the conclusion that traditional approaches, which specify a particular target group, or set of target groups, and then obtain measures of all respondents' willingness to allow the specified groups to exercise their political rights and liberties, produce invalid measures. Some of the respondents have positive, not just negative or neutral, attitudes toward the stimulus groups. For example, in a study of the British electorate (Barnum and Sullivan, 1987) rather large percentages of respondents express either neutral ("no strong feelings") or positive attitudes toward the ten extremist groups studied. Percentages ranged from a low of about 11% for fascists to a high of about 64% for both anti- and pro-abortionists, and 61% for the campaign for nuclear disarmament. Almost one of four respondents (24%) expressed indifference or liking for Communists. And we might note that these percentages were calculated on the entire sample, including those who refused or were unable to answer a question about a particular group. The percentages would be even larger if we calculated them based only on the respondents who answered the like–dislike questions.

At a minimum, researchers must assess the degree of objection (ranging from liking through neutrality to disliking) that each respondent harbors toward the target group being studied. Because he cannot and does not establish a requisite degree of objection, Mueller must assume that all respondents hold similar levels of dislike of the Communists and the other groups studied in the data he analyzes. If this assumption is incorrect, then his measures are invalid for measuring political tolerance as we have conceptualized it. If he has an alternative conceptualization which would establish that his measures are valid, he has not yet provided it.

As a number of analyses have demonstrated, the Stouffer-like questions analyzed by Mueller measure two sets of factors, group factors and act factors (Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus, 1982). Feldman (1987) has shown that the GSS data cannot be properly analyzed without distinguishing between the groups and the acts being studied. His interpretation of the group factors differs somewhat from ours, but supports our contention that variance on the Stouffer-like questions used by the GSS cannot be attributed solely to variations in tolerance. Feldman (1987:10) concludes that "the improvement in fit [of the group and act eight-factor model] shows that the simpler models fail to adequately represent the response process for these questions." Feldman also shows that respondents' systematic responses to the Stouffer items are primarily generated by their specific reactions to the groups used as stimuli rather than "considerations of specific activities engaged in." Gibson and Anderson (1984) and Gibson and Wenzel (1987) also show that a single factor model is not accurate. These studies uniformly show that the Stouffer items are powerfully affected by attitudes toward the stimulus group. Thus the implicit single factor model (that answers to these questions are determined by a single factor, tolerance) used by Mueller is confounded and does not fit the actual response patterns in the GSS data.

We do not mean to argue that the content-controlled measurement strategy is the only valid way to measure political tolerance. As in most social science research, there are many valid measures that could be used. As long as the methodology incorporates the condition that an objection must be established before support (or lack of support) for the rights and liberties of the groups in question can be assessed, a measure has some degree of validity. If one wanted to weigh the amount of intolerance at any historical moment then we concede that our procedure is not a fully sufficient methodology. A better estimate would require that a study identify the level of objection to which the issue of tolerance applies, then identify for each respondent all groups that are at or beyond that level of objection. For each respondent who identifies at least one target group, one would have to ascertain how tolerant they would be for each of the identified groups and then develop a summary score. We chose the "least-liked" procedure to ensure that the respondent was put in the proper context to which the assessment of tolerance applies so that we could account for individual differences. Lawrence's (1976) analysis attempts this, as does a recent project assessing political tolerance in England (Barnum and Sullivan, 1987). But Mueller does not address these conceptual, theoretical, and measurement issues. As a result, his procedure for estimating tolerance, absent any identification of objection to Communists, and focused exclusively on Communists, is even less appropriate as a procedure for estimating the total intolerance in a society.

In this vein, the author's comments about the incomparability of our data and approach with Stouffer's are useful. Our conceptualization of political tolerance dictated the percentages we used in our analysis, reported in part in Mueller's Table 2—respondents who do not object to any group whatsoever cannot be tolerant or intolerant since their tolerance can only be tested, according to our understanding of tolerance, if they harbor serious objections. These respondents are perhaps best considered indifferent, rather than either tolerant or intolerant. Thus in calculating the percentage tolerant, we included them in the base but did not count them as tolerant since they were not tolerant but indifferent by our conceptualization. We cannot agree with Mueller that these respondents should be excluded from the computations. They are in fact part of the electorate, and they are not tolerant by our conceptualization. These respondents do not strongly object to any political group, and so cannot be judged tolerant even if they accept the rights of various political groups.

Our mistake (and Mueller's as well) was in trying to make comparisons with Stouffer's results. Given our conceptualization, it is probably most accurate to say that our percentage tolerant and intolerant cannot, in a strict sense, be compared with Stouffer's tolerant and intolerant percentages. Mueller agrees that providing the no opinion option is essential, and as he notes, Stouffer did not offer that option. Mueller leaves the impression that the only evidence we used to conclude that levels of tolerance had not risen nearly so much as others had claimed was a direct comparison of results using the Stouffer questions with those using the least-liked questions. However, we bolstered our argument by conducting a SIFASP analysis (simultaneous factor analysis of separate populations) for the 1954 Stouffer data and 1974 NORC General Social Survey which contained identical Stouffer items.[1] The advantage of this procedure, over a comparison of percentages, is that the group and act factors are separated, as noted above (see Gibson and Anderson, 1984; Gibson and Wenzel, 1987; Feldman, 1987). In that analysis, we discovered that the changes in response patterns for the nine Stouffer items between 1954 and 1974 could be explained solely as a result of changes in the extent to which respondents distinguished among the three target groups—Communists, Socialists, and atheists—and not as a result of changes in respondents' attitudes toward the acts of speechmaking, teaching, or allowing books in libraries. In the 1950s, when the Red Scare was in full flower and domestic Communists were under attack, respondents' answers to the questions were strongly affected by whether the stimulus was Communists, Socialists, or atheists. In the 1970s, when the issue of domestic Communism had been long dormant, respondents' answers were much less affected by which of the three group stimuli were used in a question. We relied on two analyses for our conclusions that the change in attitudes of tolerance between the 1950s and 1970s was overstated by previous authors. The historical data presented by the author are interesting, but if one accepts our theoretical analysis, then they show changes in attitudes toward Communists over time and not changes in political tolerance over time.

The cross-national analysis (Sullivan et al., 1985) presents a demonstration of the importance of measuring political tolerance the way we do. It makes little sense to compare American and, for example, Scandinavian attitudes toward Communists and Socialists and claim to have compared their levels of political tolerance. These political groups have entirely different meaning to the people in the U.S. than they do to citizens in Scandinavia. We must establish some sort of "objection" criterion, and the "least-liked" or some comparable measurement technique can then be used to compare attitudes of tolerance. If that is so across nations, it is also so across different types of respondents within a country, and even across different time periods within a country. Therefore, Mueller either cannot make the types of over-time comparisons he is making, or he must qualify them by making it clear that he is analyzing changes in attitudes toward Communists, not changes in tolerance. In his presentation, he often draws more general conclusions about tolerance when he is really describing changing attitudes toward groups.

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[1] SIFASP is a computer program developed by Jöreskog for covariance analysis using different populations. SIFASP has since been superseded by and incorporated into LISREL.

The importance of the above point is illustrated quite well in some research a colleague has recently completed in Israel. Members of Knesset were interviewed and asked some Stouffer-like questions about Arabs, as well as questions using the content-controlled approach. These two measures of tolerance correlated at exactly .00. In the Stouffer-type question about Arabs, most of the left-wing Members of Knesset appear to be tolerant, the right-wing Members of Knesset intolerant. However, using the least-liked group approach, there is little if any connection between tolerance and ideology because many of the left-wingers select Kach (Rabbi Kahane's group of nationalistic right-winters) and are strongly intolerant of it. The result is a null relationship between the two approaches (Shamir, 1986; Shamir and Sullivan, 1987). Because the operationalizations are empirically unrelated, one should avoid the confusion introduced by referring to both as political tolerance.

Given the fact that totally different results are obtained using the two different sets of operations, which is to be preferred? We argue that our conceptualization is more meaningful and that the least-liked approach is a more valid measurement of this conceptualization than the more content-biased Stouffer questions. Mueller's results in Tables 1, 3, and 4 are misleading. His analysis is analogous to comparing attitudes toward Arabs among Israeli Jews over time and making the claim that tolerance in Israel has therefore been compared over time.

Mueller claims that our view can be summarized as follows: "Americans have a certain bundle of intolerance to distribute . . . [and] will shop around for other targets on which to vent their intolerance." We did indeed find (Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus, 1982; Sullivan et al., 1985) that one major source of intolerance in all three nations studied was a dogmatic, insecure personality. As a result, we do conclude that some respondents are generally dogmatic and would "find" a target group under most circumstances. This is true even in New Zealand, a country with few realistic threats and a high level of tolerant opinion. But other factors influence intolerance, including (lack of) support for democratic norms, and the degree of perceived threat. These are influenced by civic education, the political climate, and the political context generally (Sullivan et al., 1985:207–227). We did conclude that large segments of the American public are less tolerant today than they appear to be because the salient targets for their intolerance are more diverse than they were in the 1950s and hence studying the target groups of the 1950s in the 1970s and 1980s will overstate levels of tolerance. We also concluded that changing historical circumstances can lead to changing levels of political tolerance, but unlike Stouffer, we did not conclude that this will be an inevitable increase resulting from improving levels of education and other progressive changes in society. Changes in historical and political circumstances affect levels of political tolerance, and future historical circumstances may produce increased intolerance.

Mueller claims that no similarly threatening group has emerged to fill the vacuum left by the Communists and their sympathizers. But our analysis of threat indicates that Americans' levels of threat during the 1970s were very high—as high as that expressed by Israelis and much higher than that shown by New Zealand respondents. These high levels of perceived threat appear to help sustain a relatively high level of intolerance among the American public.

Mueller does not accept our measures of threat as valid, and therefore would not accept the above points. Our factor analysis shows that all of the adjective pairs he mentions load very highly on the same factor. Since safe/dangerous has the highest loading on the factor and is therefore the best one to emphasize in "naming" the factor, we concluded that "perceived threat" was a good label for it. The same measures of threat were used in the three-nation study (Sullivan et al., 1985) with similar results. A related point is Mueller's claim that this factor really measures perceived badness or degree of dislike and thus it is not surprising that it correlates so well with tolerance. He seems to imply that it is almost tautological. Our own view is that although this represents an affective factor, it is one based on fear and threat. Fear of these groups, and the threat they pose, may lead one to dislike them a great deal, but the basis of the affect is the perception of threat. One major problem with Mueller's view is that although political tolerance in all three countries studied correlates very strongly with measures of personality, support for the general norms of democracy, and political ideology, in none of them did our measures of threat correlate significantly with these other variables. If threat is virtually synonymous with tolerance, then it ought to correlate with the same variables as tolerance.

In sum, we find Mueller's research to be persuasive in arguing that attitudes toward Communists have changed over time. We find his claims regarding the levels or structure of political tolerance to be less persuasive.

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FROM OBEDIENCE TO AUTONOMY

CHANGES IN TRAITS DESIRED IN CHILDREN, 1924–1978

DUANE F. ALWIN

Abstract This paper presents results from a comparison of data on the traits desired in children from the Lynds' studies of Muncie (Middletown), Indiana, in the 1920s with similar data collected in a 1978 replication of the Lynds' work by Caplow et al. (1982). These results indicate that major changes have occurred in the most preferred qualities of children over this century, providing relatively strong evidence of changes in parent–child relations over this period. These patterns suggest that adult preferences for child qualities in contemporary society give more emphasis to qualities linked to the autonomy of children, whereas earlier desiderata stressed greater obedience to institutional and adult authority. These trends are interpreted in terms of changing relationships in the family and in the context of the response of the family to social, economic, and demographic changes during the twentieth century.

This paper focuses upon changes in parent–child relationships in U.S. society over the twentieth century. The principle vehicle for this analysis consists of data from the Middletown studies of the 1920s carried out by Helen and Robert Lynd in Muncie, Indiana, and data from a

DUANE F. ALWIN is Professor of Sociology and Research Scientist at the Institute for Social Research, the University of Michigan. An earlier version of this paper was prepared for the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, held in New York, August 1986. The paper was also presented in December 1986 at the Center for Middletown Studies' lecture series, cosponsored by the Friends of Bracken Library, Ball State University. The research was supported in part by a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health (MH-37289). An important debt is owed Theodore Caplow, Howard Bahr, and Bruce Chadwick for the use of data from their 1978 survey of Muncie, Indiana, and special thanks are due Bruce Chadwick for providing tabulations upon which this report is in part based. Thanks are due Alan Kerckhoff and Arland Thornton for commenting on an earlier version of this paper. The author also acknowledges the assistance of John Hewitt and Dwight Hoover for access to the resources of the Center for Middletown Studies at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana. Lynn Dielman, Mark Glaza, and Frank Mierzma provided expert research assistance.

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1978 replication of the Middletown studies conducted by Caplow and others (Caplow et al., 1982; Caplow, Bahr, and Chadwick, 1983). The Lynds (1929) asked a sample of Muncie women residents ($N = 141$) to rate each of several characteristics presented to them according to their emphasis in training their children. They also asked the women to rate the same traits in terms of how they believed their mother would have rated them some thirty years earlier. In 1978 Caplow, Bahr, and Chadwick asked another sample of Muncie women ($N = 333$) very similar questions, including the perceived ratings their mothers would have given the presented qualities. Some of these results were reported by Caplow and Chadwick (1979:382–383), but these data have not been systematically analyzed as indicators of social change. In this paper I present a detailed investigation of the changes in responses to the Lynds' questions over this time period.

The Lynds' Analysis of Child Rearing

One of the major areas covered by the Lynds' *Middletown* was the interpretation of the implications of social change for the family, particularly the orientations of parents to their children (see especially pp. 131–152).[1] Aware of the technological transformation of the American midwest during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they reported the Middletown of the 1920s to be vastly different from that of the earlier century. Whereas the traditional Middletown gave emphasis to the importance of child bearing, important for the agrarian economy of the late-nineteenth-century Indiana, the "urban" Middletown of the 1920s, having shifted in its technological base, showed evidence of a greater emphasis on child rearing (p. 131), that is, an emphasis on providing for children in a way that would enhance their development.[2] Declining fertility and a changing economy were seen as critical factors in understanding the conditions of family life that shaped parental orientations and differentially affected the experiences of children.

The Lynds observed that the traditional conception of child rearing in the late nineteenth century consisted primarily of "making children conform to the approved ways of the group" (p. 132), securing the maximum obedience from them. The Middletown of the 1920s, by contrast, was seen as more differentiated in its orientation toward children, and the family was viewed as a less potent force in securing adherence to "established group sanctions" (p. 133). The concerns of parents in the 1920s, as described by the Lynds, were with the fact that their children had too much independence. They note that with "the diminishing place of the home in the life of the child" comes the greater "sophistication of social life" (p. 135). For older children, issues of curfew, time spent alone with members of the opposite sex (especially in the automobile), the changing dress and "aggressiveness" of teenage girls, and the general issue of parental authority in the lives of young persons were matters worthy of note (pp. 135–152).

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[1] All page references in this section of the paper are to Lynd and Lynd, 1929.

[2] The Lynds remarked that "one cannot talk with Middletown mothers without being continually impressed by the eagerness of many to lay hold of every available resource for help in training their children" (p. 149).

In sum, the Lynds observed considerable social change between the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, and they expected these trends to continue into the following decades. Their theme of "modernization" suggested that the changes afoot in Middletown were part of a larger process of social differentiation, a process in which a society improves its control over the environment via new technology and social organization (Caplow et al., 1982:408). And, consistent with other sociological observers at that time (e.g., Ogburn, 1922; Sorokin, 1927), they argued that modernization would gradually lessen the control of the family over the lives of its members.

In addition to their perception of temporal changes in parental orientations to children, a more central feature of the Lynds' analysis of child rearing was its attention to the role of social class. For them "social class" referred to differing labor force activities—the "working class" referring to those addressing their activities primarily to *things* and the "business class" referring to those whose activities were directed to *people*.[3] The Lynds considered class and its associated conditions of living to be "the most significant single cultural factor tending to influence what one does all day long throughout one's life" (p. 24), including conceptions of what is possible and desirable for children. Their findings with respect to the relationship of social class with parental values represented one of the first empirical demonstrations of the relationship. They identified a contrast between parental emphasis on autonomy or self-direction in children vs. the emphasis on obedience.[4] Working-class parents tended to emphasize conformity to adult and institutional authority, whereas parents of the business class registered greater preference for autonomy in children. Several lines of research following the Lynds' work utilized measures of this contrast and provided evidence of the relationship between socioeconomic variables and autonomy vs. conformity values (e.g., Duvall, 1946; Miller and Swanson, 1958; Kohn, 1959, 1963, 1969, 1976; Lenski, 1961; Alwin, 1984, 1988).[5]

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[3] This usage, consistent with more recent conceptions of class (see Wright, 1980), emphasizes the Marxian thesis that the nature of labor activity is a dominant organizing force within society (Habermas, 1973). The working-class category included those whose work utilized "material tools in the making of things and the performance of services," while the business-class category included persons who were involved in "the selling or promotion of things, services and ideas" (p. 22).

[4] It is interesting to note that Piaget (1932) in his examination of the principles of moral judgment in children developed a contrast between moral autonomy and moral heteronomy, the latter referring to evaluative judgments conforming to the dictates of external authority. Compatible with this set of conceptual distinctions, Miller and Swanson (1958) contrast parental orientations that are "entrepreneurial" (emphasizing child

Social Change in Middletown

Returning to Middletown in the post-Depression era, the Lynds witnessed several indications of continued changes in social life relevant to child rearing. Rather than the continued impact of growing size and the mechanization of its industrial processes, the major impetus for social change came from outside the geographical boundaries of Middletown. The institutional arrangements and the social structure of the community were viewed as the major sources of stability in the behavior of Middletown residents, whereas the external economic, social, and political events of the late 1920s and early 1930s were seen as the ultimate sources of change.

The implications of these changes for family life and parental orientations to children were, however, not a major focus of the Lynds' restudy of Middletown; and what few observations were made at that time regarding changes in the family emphasized continuity as much as change. However, they saw continued change in declining fertility and the increased acceptance of contraceptive aids (Lynd and Lynd, 1937:167),[6] a disintegration of traditional family roles, especially changes in the options available to women (p. 178), and the continued widening of the gap of mutual understanding between parents and their

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self-control and a manipulative stance toward the environment) with those that are "bureaucratic" (stressing reliance on external forms of behavioral control and an accommodation to the environment). Similarly, Kohn (1959, 1963, 1969, 1977) identifies the contrast between "self-direction" (thinking for oneself) and "conformity to external authority" (following the dictates of authority). And Lenski (1961) used the terms "intellectual autonomy" (thinking for oneself) and "intellectual heteronomy" (obedience to the dictates of others) to make this distinction.

[5] The importance of the Lynds' analysis of the role of class can in part be measured by the continued echoing of this theme in the literature on social stratification in later years. For example, in the 1940s and 1950s researchers debated whether the working class was more permissive than the middle class (see Davis and Havighurst, 1948; Havighurst and Davis, 1955) or vice versa (see Maccoby et al., 1954; Sears, Maccoby, and Levin, 1957). Later interpretations (e.g., Bronfenbrenner, 1958; Kohn, 1959) focused on the goals of child rearing rather than the means. Kohn (1963, 1969, 1981) emphasizes the concept of parental values as embodying the standards of desirability parents use in evaluating the behavior of their children, regardless of their child-rearing practices, that is, regardless of the means they use to achieve their child-rearing goals (see Williams, 1968).

[6] Page references in this section, unless otherwise noted, are to Lynd and Lynd, 1937.

children. On this latter point, the Lynds were given the impression of "a more self-conscious subculture of the young in Middletown" in the mid-1930s (p. 167). The postponement of marriage (p. 168), increasing levels of premarital sexual activity among the young (p. 169), the emphasis on social activities tied to the high school (p. 171), and the desire for employment among young women (p. 179) were all indications of the general observation that "adult-imposed restraints of obedience to parents, school, and public opinion have weakened further as the adult world has crumbled under the depression" (p. 168).[7]

The Lynds' hypothesized continued changes in the relationships between children and their parents. They claimed that the working classes of the 1920s were performing at a level of technological complexity experienced decades earlier by the business class. Society was moving in the direction of greater complexity because of changing technology, e.g., the development of new tools and techniques of machine technology, changing social organization, and events occurring in the wider society, e.g., the influence of the mass media and the infusion of federal funds at the community level (Caplow et al., 1982:22–30).

The Lynds' hypotheses of continued change in the relationships between children and their parents are challenged by Caplow et al. (1982:33) in their restudy of Middletown in the late 1970s. They argue that "the scope and weight of parental authority in Middletown do not seem to have changed very much since 1925." To support this contention Caplow et al. utilize data from high school students, surveyed in 1977, which is comparable in major respects to the surveys of high school students conducted by the Lynds in the 1920s (see also Caplow and Bahr, 1979; Bahr, 1980). They found (1982:137–140), with a few notable exceptions, that male high school students in 1977 reported very similar patterns in aspects of independence from their parents as did their 1924 counterparts. For example, boys in 1977 were no more likely to spend their evenings away from home than boys in 1924. In terms of spending money, 1977 boys were somewhat more dependent upon their parents compared to their 1924 counterparts.

On the other hand, and somewhat contrary to the conclusions of Caplow et al., girls were substantially more independent of their parents in 1977. Girls were substantially more likely to spend their evenings away from home than those in 1924. In fact, in 1977 there were no sex differences in this aspect of child independence. In 1977 girls were less dependent than their 1924 counterparts on parents for spending money. And both sexes reported less dependence upon parents for information about sex in 1977 compared to 1924 (Bahr, 1980:42–43).

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[7] These observations are based on ethnographic data and are not buttressed by other sources of information, as were the observations made by the Lynds in the 1920s.

On the basis of these and other findings, Caplow et al. (1982:21–22, 136–158) conclude that descriptions of the nature of parent–child relationships found in the Lynds' original study of Middletown also characterized the reports of youth in the 1970s. They argue that, in many respects, "the changes that occurred between 1890 and 1925 were much more extensive and important than those that took place between 1925 and 1977" (p. 21). The transition from a "traditional to a modern family, from child labor to prolonged education, from hand-powered to the machine-powered home, and from the closed to an open community had been accomplished by 1925" (p. 21), and few important changes in the family occurred since. This slowing of the processes of modernization, they argue, means that the experiences of youth in today's Middletown resemble the experiences of the past generations.

The Research Problem

Over the past several decades the American family has experienced significant changes that are relevant to the degree of autonomy of its members. Indeed, there is widespread agreement among students of marriage and family life that major changes are occurring in traditional family arrangements (Masnick and Bane, 1980; Cherlin, 1981; Thornton and Freedman, 1983; Inkeles, 1984), many of which reflect changes in parent–child relationships. Although there are a number of indicators of changes in the family, several such indicators stand out. First, because of declining fertility rates since the eighteenth century and, from a more contemporary perspective, since the early 1960s, there is a trend toward smaller families (Westoff and Ryder, 1977). Second, because of greater economic independence of adult children from their parents and other relatives, and because of increasing divorce rates, there has been a decline in the number of adults living in the same household (Glick, 1984; Inkeles, 1984). Third, because of changing sex-role attitudes (Thornton, Alwin, and Camburn, 1983), there has been an increase in the labor force activities of women with young children (see Davis, 1984).[8] Finally, because of delays in childbearing in recent decades, the typical parent in contemporary society is somewhat older than the typical parent in earlier decades. All of these changes have implications for adult orientations to children.

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[8] I should note that changes in attitudes do not necessarily imply changes in behavior, and trends in the household division of labor do not necessarily reflect these attitudinal changes (e.g., see Miller and Garrison, 1982). At the same time, some changing aspects of sex-role attitudes have emphasized declining support for the idea that women should be restricted to household roles, and this change, coupled with the observation of changes in female labor force participation, indicates a significant aspect of changing orientations to children, since, on average, working women spend less direct time with children.

Social change is in part mediated by parental influences (see Inkeles, 1955). Parents experiencing social change are likely to incorporate those values in raising their children which they identify with successful preparation for adult life. Consequently, in order to assess changes in parent–child relations one can profitably consider responses of parents, particularly indicators of parental values—what traits parents find desirable in their children. To the extent, then, that parental socialization practices are reflective of how parents think their children may be best prepared for participation in the future adult society, parental values are useful indicators of social change.

The Data

SAMPLES

Some of the figures presented in my analysis of changes in parental values were obtained from the published reports of the Lynds. Specifically, I rely on tabulations they provided (1929:523, table 14) based on a small sample of Middletown housewives (*N* = 141). This was a sample of married women living with one or more children between the ages 6 and 18 years. This sample, although not selected using methods of probability sampling, was described by the Lynds as "widely representative" of the social diversity of Middletown, particularly of the "working" and "business" classes (1929:509). They approached these data with warranted prudence, noting that the data are "offered not as an absolute proof" of the behavior of residents of Middletown, but as what were believed to be "significant indices to the behavior of this community" (1929:509). I approach these data with similar caution, since there is little available information regarding sample selection procedures and response rates.

I also analyze data from a 1978 sample of Middletown, which replicated the Lynds' survey of women with children at home. This data set, assembled by Caplow et al. (1982), contains responses obtained to survey interviews with 333 women. These were eligible respondents from a probability sample of households taken from a 1977 city directory. The response rate in this survey was 42%.[9]

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[9] The methods used by the Lynds are described on pp. 505–510 in the appendix to the 1929 volume. The available details of the 1978 study are reported by Caplow et al. (1982:403). No explanation for this low response rate is given in that report.

MEASURES

The measures of parental values used in the following analysis are based on questions about traits desired in children, which were virtually identical in the two surveys. The women in both surveys were asked to rate a list of 15 qualities of children according to their emphasis upon them in training their children. These women were also asked to rate the same list "as her own home training led her to believe her mother would have rated it thirty years ago when she was a child" (Lynd and Lynd, 1929:143). The qualities involved were in fact attributes of children, so the ratings reflect parental values. The Lynds report their methods as follows:

> The list consisted of fifteen habits observed to be stressed in greater or lesser degree in Middletown in the training of children: frankness; desire to make a name in the world; concentration; social-mindedness (defined as a "sense of personal responsibility for those less fortunate"); strict obedience; appreciation of art, music and poetry; economy in money matters; loyalty to the church; knowledge of sex hygiene; tolerance (defined as "respect for opinions opposed to one's own"); curiosity; patriotism; good manners; independence (defined as "ability to think and act for oneself"); getting very good grades in school. The lists were given to the women and they first marked the habits which they themselves regard as most important, rating the three most important "A," the five next most important "B," any of third-rate importance "C," and any which they regarded as unnecessary or undesirable zero. They then set down in another column what they thought, in the light of their own home training, their mothers' ratings would have been. (1929:143–144)

The replication of these procedures by Caplow et al. (1982) in the 1978 survey are as follows:

> I would now like to ask you about the qualities to be used in the home training of a boy and girl. (If the respondent doesn't have any children; state: About how you feel children should be raised.)
>
> 1. Which qualities do you feel are most important (Limit to 3); which ones are of second importance (Limit to 5); are of third importance, and any you would omit entirely? Let's do boys first. (Repeat for girls)
>
> 1. Frankness in dealing with others.
> 2. Desire to make a name in the world.
> 3. Concentration.
> 4. Social-mindedness (a sense of personal responsibility for those less fortunate).
> 5. Strict obedience.
> 6. Appreciation of art, music, and poetry.
> 7. Economy in money matters.
> 8. Loyalty to the church.
> 9. Knowledge of sex hygiene.
> 10. Tolerance (respect for opinions opposed to one's own).
> 11. Curiosity.

12. Patriotism.
13. Good manners.
14. Independence (ability to think and act for oneself).
15. Getting very good grades in school.

1a. How would your mother have rated these qualities when she was the same age as you are? (Repeat items for both boys and girls)

In 1978 these qualities were rated twice: once as they apply to the training of boys and once to the training of girls. This was a departure from the methods employed by the Lynds, but, consistent with the aims of the original research, the 1978 respondents were also asked to rate the qualities according to how their mothers would have rated them "when at the respondent's age." And again, in 1978 these ratings were obtained separately for boys and girls.

Changes in Traits Desired in Children

Table 1 presents the relative preferences of qualities on the above list by members of the 1924 and 1978 surveys. This table presents the proportion of the sample selecting a given trait as one of the three given most emphasis in training children. Separate information for rating boys and girls, as in the 1978 survey, was not obtained in the original study; thus, this information is combined here through simple averaging of response frequencies.[10] Table 1 gives this information for the total sample and for the business-class and working-class subsamples in both years.[11] The ratings by respondents of their mother's child-training approaches are also presented in this table; however, initially our primary concern is with the changes in self-reports between 1924 and 1978 (shown in boldface in Table 1).

These results indicate substantial change in parental values among members of both business and working classes over the more than fifty years studied. All but two of the traits listed in the table (*frankness* and *concentration*) show statistically significant differences in proportions ($p < .05$) between 1924 and 1978 in the total sample.[12] The changes are generally in the direction of emphasizing less obedience to the family and church and encouraging greater individual independence and responsibility. Indicative of these patterns is the dramatic shift in preferences for *strict obedience* over time, from 45% in 1924 to 17% in 1978. Similarly, preferences for *loyalty to the church* also declined radically, from 50% to 22%. It is remarkable that both of these qualities, *strict obedience* and *loyalty to the church,* were of highest importance in the Lynds' 1924 sample, whereas in 1978 they were of secondary importance. In addition, these data show there is an accompanying shift in the direction of greater emphasis on the autonomy/independence of the child. In 1978 the most important traits desired in children were *independence* and *tolerance,* both having been considerably less popular choices in 1924. The proportion selecting *independence* rose from 25% to 76%, while that choosing *tolerance* rose from 6% to 47%. If one accepts these samples as representative of parents in the two time periods, these are dramatic temporal patterns, reflecting substantial social change.

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[10] The ratings for boys and girls were in fact quite similar for all traits.

[11] As used by the Lynds, the working-class category included those whose work utilized "material tools in the making of things and the performances of services," while the business-class category included persons who were involved in "the selling or promotion of things, services and ideas" (1929:22). In the 1978 data the working-class category is composed of household heads' occupations falling into the 1970 Census three-digit occupational codes greater than 400, and the business-class category is composed of those households whose head's occupation falls into the 1970 Census three-digit codes of less than 400 (see Alwin, 1984:366).

[12] The statistical tests performed are tests of differences in proportions (see Blalock, 1972:228–232). Because the 1924 sample is not a probability sample and due to the

In accord with this general shift away from the valuation of obedience and in the direction of greater desires for traits linked to autonomy, there are a number of additional changes worthy of mention. *Patriotism* declined in importance from an endorsement of 21% in 1924 to less than 5% in 1978. The preference for *good manners* declined from 30% to 23%, while that of *economy in money* dropped in importance from 25% to 17%. In addition, preferences for *curiosity* and *social mindedness* also increased modestly during this period.

CLASS DIFFERENCES

For the most part, the important patterns observed in the total sample also appear within the two class categories employed here. There are class differences evident in the data presented in Table 1, consistent with other studies (see especially Kohn, 1959, 1969; Lenski, 1961; Alwin, 1984); and these class differences are generally found to persist over time, reflecting a broad-based social change not peculiar to one particular class grouping. The most striking patterns evidenced in a comparison of values across class categories shows the business class to be more likely to stress *independence* and less likely to value *good*

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relatively low response rate in the 1978 survey, these statistical tests are technically not appropriate. Still, I employ them here in order to get some sense of their likelihood of occurring by chance. Rather than clutter the table with indicators of statistical significance, I report levels of statistical significance in the text. In assessing class differences at the two times, one must bear in mind that the smaller sample size in 1924 makes it more difficult for a given difference to be viewed as statistically significant in 1924 than in 1978.

Table 1. Proportion of Sample Choosing Trait as One of the Three Most Desired Traits for Children to Have, by Survey Year and Social Class

	1924						1978					
			Class						Class			
	Total		Business		Working		Total		Business		Working	
Trait	Mother	Self	Mother	Self	Mother	Self	Mother	Self	Mother	Self	Mother	Self
Frankness	24.8	**27.0**	38.2	**43.2**	17.9	**21.2**	16.7	**25.5**	16.3	**22.3**	18.9	**32.6**
Desire to make name	5.0	**5.0**	2.9	**0.0**	6.0	**6.7**	6.6	**0.9**	7.1	**1.1**	6.7	**0.7**
Concentration	4.0	**9.2**	5.9	**18.9**	3.0	**5.8**	4.1	**7.7**	2.7	**6.5**	5.6	**9.3**
Social mindedness	6.9	**12.8**	8.8	**21.6**	6.0	**9.6**	17.3	**25.7**	21.7	**29.9**	13.0	**21.9**
Strict obedience	64.4	**45.4**	70.6	**43.2**	61.2	**46.2**	43.8	**16.8**	42.4	**13.6**	49.6	**20.7**
Appreciation of art, music, poetry	5.0	**9.2**	8.8	**13.5**	3.0	**7.7**	3.3	**4.8**	4.6	**6.5**	0.7	**3.0**
Economy in money	21.8	**24.8**	5.9	**8.1**	29.8	**30.8**	26.0	**16.8**	20.4	**12.0**	34.4	**23.0**
Loyalty to the church	69.3	**50.4**	67.6	**35.1**	70.1	**55.8**	35.0	**22.4**	38.0	**22.8**	32.2	**23.3**
Knowledge of sex hygiene	2.0	**14.9**	0.0	**16.2**	3.0	**14.4**	5.1	**7.8**	2.7	**4.9**	8.9	**12.6**
Tolerance	5.0	**5.7**	5.9	**10.8**	4.5	**3.8**	21.9	**46.8**	25.0	**50.8**	19.3	**45.6**
Curiosity	1.0	**0.7**	2.9	**0.0**	0.0	**1.0**	2.6	**9.9**	3.5	**15.8**	1.5	**3.0**
Patriotism	16.8	**20.6**	11.8	**21.6**	19.4	**20.2**	8.3	**4.5**	11.4	**5.7**	4.1	**3.0**
Good manners	40.6	**30.5**	38.2	**18.9**	41.8	**34.6**	40.4	**23.3**	35.9	**17.4**	50.0	**32.2**
Independence	15.8	**24.8**	17.6	**45.9**	14.9	**17.3**	34.4	**75.8**	37.2	**83.7**	32.6	**70.7**
Getting very good grades in school	14.9	**19.1**	11.8	**2.7**	16.4	**25.0**	23.6	**6.3**	22.6	**7.3**	26.7	**5.6**
N	101	141	34	37	67	104	313	324	175	184	133	135

manners and *strict obedience* than are members of the working class at both time periods. The greater preference of *tolerance* and *social mindedness* by the business class is evident in both time periods, although these differences are not statistically significant at both times. The preference for *loyalty to the church* was markedly greater in 1924 among the business class; however, in 1978 the two groups converged on a substantially lower value. It is also noteworthy that there is no class effect on preferences for *patriotism*, and in the post-Vietnam era both groups evince little concern for patriotism as a matter of emphasis in child rearing.

While the class differences are relatively consistent, there are some unexpected, though perhaps understandable, patterns reflected in these depictions. As the data in the table show, preferences for *frankness* have been relatively stable, but the class differences have reversed themselves, and the overall change is statistically significant ($p < .05$).[13] In 1924 the business class exceeded the working class by more than 20 percentage points in the expressed preference for this quality (frankness in dealing with others), whereas in 1978 the working class exceeded the business class by 12 points. This may reflect a somewhat changed meaning of the phrase, and although the intent was perhaps to assess qualities like honesty and forthrightness, its meaning may be more ambiguous in the more recent period.

A similar interaction with time, although not significant, is demonstrated by the relative preferences for the quality *economy in money*. While there was an apparent class effect in 1924, with the working class considerably more concerned with saving money, by 1978 the concerns of both groups begin to converge. The percentage differences in 1924 and 1978 were 23% and 11% respectively. This may reflect the general improvement in economic well-being of Middletown's working class since the early part of the twentieth century, and additionally, perhaps reflects the concerns of business people during the economic recession of the late 1970s.

RESPONDENTS' ESTIMATES OF THEIR MOTHERS' PREFERENCES

To this point in the examination of the data shown in Table 1 I have focused only on the comparisons of self-reports of women in 1924 and 1978. The assessment of changes in orientations to children can to some extent be broadened by taking into account the reports given by these women regarding their estimates of their mothers' child-training emphases. There is obviously considerable ambiguity in these ratings, since they are a mixture of both the errors of children's perceptions of their parents' behavior and the realities of family life in an earlier period.

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[13] This interaction of time with class was evaluated in terms of the differences in the class differences in proportions (see Blalock, 1972:230–231).

If one chooses to believe the respondent ratings of their mother primarily reflect subjective biases, there is some evidence for the view that parents are perceived to be substantially more conservative, regardless of the time period. In both survey years, for example, women rate their mothers as more *obedience-oriented,* in favor of less *independence,* and greater *loyalty to the church.* There are some exceptions to this pattern, but the major theme is one of the earlier generation being perceived as stressing greater obedience and less autonomy. On the other hand, these findings are also consistent with the idea that the parent ratings reflect valid point estimates at an earlier time. And, from this point of view, these data simply add further confirmation to, and extension of, the objective trends reported in the 1924 and 1978 Middleton surveys (see Table 1), namely the shift from obedience to autonomy. Unfortunately, we have no clear way of choosing between these interpretations, but either is consistent with the findings.[14]

Explanations of Change

The foregoing analyses indicate there is broad support for the conclusion that major changes have occurred since the beginning of this century in traits desired in children. These results suggest changing patterns of relationships in the family and changing parental conceptions of what traits are desirable in children in modern society. Preferences for autonomy in children have increased and preferences for obedience to adult authority have declined in Middletown. These results are consistent with temporal patterns observed in my analysis of data from Detroit area surveys (Alwin, 1984, 1986) and from national data (Wright and Wright, 1976), which suggest a historical movement in child-rearing orientations from a dominant emphasis on obedience in children to a contemporary emphasis on qualities associated with autonomy. The Detroit surveys, while rich in their possibilities, are limited to the time period from 1958 to the present; and the only available national study pertains to the decade between 1964 and 1973. The patterns they reflect, however, are consistent with the broader time period covered by the Middletown data. Both studies suggest that parental values have changed in significant ways over the present century.

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[14] Using data of this same type Inkeles ([1955] 1983:183) concluded that such differences between respondent self-reports and estimates of their parents reflected social change rather than the biased perceptions of the present generation. He states: "we have data that indicate this procedure of ascertaining the child-rearing values of an earlier generation by accepting the description given by those who had been the children of the group being studied, is methodologically less suspect than might appear to be the case."

There are (at least) three general, non–mutually exclusive, theoretically plausible sources of these changes: (1) the independently changing nature of values and orientations to the family, (2) the changing nature of aspects of technology and/or production placing demands on increasingly complex characteristics of members of society and increasingly of children, or (3) the changing characteristics of one or more subgroups within society, having to do with the dynamics of social composition and assimilation of ethnic groups. I briefly consider each of these in the following paragraphs.

One important potential interpretation of the changes observed in the foregoing refers to changes in more general aspects of the family, not simply in parent–child relationships. As indicated above, an increasing number of important changes in the nature of the American family have occurred over several decades. Many of these changes reflect a somewhat broad-based shift in the direction of granting greater autonomy to family members, particularly women and children. The changes in parental values documented here may reflect the exogenous influences of broader-based changes happening in family relationships, independent of other changes occurring in the wider society (e.g., Thompson, 1984; Inkeles, 1984; Zelizer, 1985).

On the other hand, the changing nature of the family may not be exogenous, but may be due to more basic changing features of technology and social organization. Thus, a second view of these changes, articulated by the Lynds, and to some extent by Caplow et al. (1982), is that they reflect the movement of society along a dimension of increased complexity, that is, the process of modernization. According to this view, changes in technological and organizational aspects of the economy generate changes in desirable individual characteristics that correspond to changing aspects of social roles (Inkeles and Smith, 1974; Bowles and Gintis, 1976). The growth of organizational roles requiring greater technical training and the greater demands for educational certification among professional occupations have contributed to major changes in educational expansion over the past century (Collins, 1979). And the expansion in levels of education in this century is especially important in this regard, given the well-known connection between levels of education and adult values favoring the development of autonomy (rather than conformity) in children (Kohn, 1969, 1981; Alwin, 1984).

Census data for Middletown assembled by Howard Bahr indicate dramatic changes in levels of education since 1940.[15] In 1940 the median number of years of schooling completed in the population 25 years or older was 8.7 years for men and 9.0 for women. In 1980 the comparable figures were 11.5 and 11.6 for men and women respectively. Somewhat greater increases occurred in the U.S. population, from a median of 8.6 in 1940 to 12.6 in 1980. Nonetheless, these changes in education in Middletown are substantial.

The changes in parental values witnessed above are particularly interesting in this regard, since as Inkeles (1955) keenly observed, parental orientations to children are an important indicator of social change. Parents experiencing social change are likely to want to raise their children differently from what they perceive were their own parents' approaches to child rearing, adapting their child-rearing values (and practices) to meet the demands of social life as they currently experience it. Through their orientations to children, the parental generation not only passes along stable norms and values of the culture, it also mediates social change through emphases in child rearing aimed at preparing children for the society of the present and future. In this regard, then, the increased complexity of occupational roles (not necessarily bureaucratization) between the 1920s and the 1980s (see Kohn, 1969:193–194) and the increased desirability of educational attainment for children in U.S. society may be in part responsible for the dramatic changes in parental values in Middletown summarized above.[16] The qualities emphasized in the parental values of 1978 are well-suited to progress through the modern educational system (see Bowles and Gintis, 1976).

A third possible explanation for these changes refers to the changing characteristics of one or more subgroups in Middletown. My research in the Detroit area (Alwin, 1984), for example, has identified significant changes in parental values in Detroit from 1958 to 1983, largely due to the changing values of Catholics. These patterns are consistent with a more general shift in the orientations of Catholic ethnic groups of European descent in American society (see Alba, 1976, 1981). And while these patterns may not be generalizable to Muncie, Indiana, since there are relatively few Catholics residing there, they do suggest the possibility that social trends, such as those observed above, may be due in part to disproportionate change among subgroups.[17] One potential such differentiating factor, examined in the above analysis, is social class; however, little evidence exists to suggest that one such social category accounts for most of the major changes reported here. Indeed, one of the important findings in the present research is the great uniformity in social change across social class categories.

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[15] Some of these data are presented in Bahr, 1980:49. Figures for 1980 were obtained from the Middletown Studies Center.

[16] The case record data for the 1924 study are not available. Thus, it is not possible to directly examine such changes in Middletown through a systematic analysis of change in the two data sets.

Discussion and Conclusions

These results are of particular interest, given the general conclusions offered by the Middletown III project suggesting the lack of substantial change in critical aspects of family relationships in Middletown between 1924 and the late 1970s (see Bahr, 1980; Bahr, Caplow, and Leigh, 1980; Caplow and Chadwick, 1979; Caplow et al., 1982; and Hill, 1982). Is it possible to reconcile these two sets of findings?

One possibility is that, while changes have occurred in subjective aspects of parental values, fundamental changes have not occurred in many behavioral aspects of parent–child relationships. Such an explanation draws attention to the issue of whether subjective indicators are less valid indicators of change than are behavioral measures. This is clearly an issue, since attitudes and values may change in advance of more basic roles and norms; still, as I suggested earlier in the paper, there is actually some evidence in the behavioral reports of Middletown youth of the changes in values I present above (see Bahr, 1980; Caplow et al., 1982:136–158).

As Bahr (1980) indicates, there is some evidence that adolescent children are more independent of their parents in contemporary Middletown than was the case for their 1924 counterparts. Although adolescent boys were reported to be substantially similar at the two time points, adolescent girls in 1977 were significantly more likely to spend evenings away from home and significantly less likely to depend upon parents for spending money, and adolescents of both sexes were less likely to depend upon their parents for information about sex. On every indicator presented by Bahr and his colleagues, female youth were significantly more independent in 1977 than in 1924. Moreover, young persons of both sexes in 1977 were significantly less likely to report that the number of evenings spent away from home on school nights was a source of disagreement between them and their parents (Bahr, 1980:44). Fewer disagreements were reported over the use of the automobile and over church attendance in 1977 than in 1924, and more conflicts were reported having to do with friendship choices and responsibilities for household tasks. Thus, although there may be several similarities in aspects of parent–child relationships over this time period, the areas in which differences emerge are particularly revealing.

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[17] In both periods Roman Catholics comprised about 10% of the population of Middletown (Caplow et al., 1983), and even though one might expect Catholics there to have changed in line with the Detroit findings, they represent too small a part of the population to have had much impact.

Bahr and his colleagues (Bahr, 1980:46–48; Caplow et al., 1982:149–150) also provide some interesting subjective data on young persons' views on the "most desirable" qualities of mothers and fathers in 1924 and 1977, which are indicative of change in the direction of greater autonomy in the relationships of family members. Compared to those adolescents surveyed in 1924 by the Lynds, adolescents in 1977 wanted significantly greater respect for their opinions from their parents, wanted mothers to "nag" them less about what they did, and believed that "being a good cook and housekeeper" was a substantially less desirable quality for a mother to have.

Thus, the differences in conclusions reached in my analysis of parental values and those reached by Bahr and colleagues about the extent of change in parent–child relationships do not seem to depend upon the subjective nature of parental values measures. Rather, the conclusions appear to depend as much upon emphasis and interpretation of the data rather than the documented trends themselves. Bahr (1980:51), for example, suggests that where change has occurred it has been in the direction of the lessening of constraint of parents over their children. By contrast, Caplow et al. (1982:31–33) suggest that because of the slowing of social change in Middletown, the experiences of children and adolescents are not all that different from those experiences of the preceding generations, "not conspicuously freer or more constrained than their predecessors."

However one views the nature of historical change and stability in family forms and processes in Western society over the past centuries, about which there is a range of opinion (e.g., Aries, 1962; Greven, 1970; DeMause, 1974; Stone, 1977; Schlumbohm, 1980; Smith, 1983), there is little question that, even within the past half-century in the United States, the institutional experiences of parents and the contexts of child rearing are changing. And, whatever interpretation one gives to the changes in parental values in Middletown witnessed in the foregoing presentation, there seems to be substantial evidence in favor of the observation that parents desire greater independence and less obedience in their children, and that these values are to some extent embodied in their children's behavior.

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THE EFFECTS OF RACE OF THE INTERVIEWER ON MEASURES OF ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION BY BLACKS IN SRC NATIONAL ELECTION STUDIES

BARBARA A. ANDERSON
BRIAN D. SILVER AND
PAUL R. ABRAMSON

Abstract This study investigates the effect of the race of the interviewer on self-reported voting, actual voting, and political attitudes of black respondents, based on the SRC/CPS National Election Studies (NES) of 1964, 1976, 1978, 1980, and 1984. The impact of race of the interviewer in the NES surveys has not been analyzed previously. Over the course of the five studies, the proportion of black respondents who were interviewed by black interviewers declined sharply, particularly in the South. Almost all white respondents were interviewed by whites.

Except for southern blacks in the pre–Voting Rights Act election of 1964, black nonvoters in the presidential election surveys

BARBARA A. ANDERSON is Professor of Sociology at the University of Michigan. BRIAN D. SILVER is Professor and Chair of the Department of Political Science at Michigan State University. PAUL R. ABRAMSON is Professor of Political Science at Michigan State University. The authors would like to thank Mike Coble, Harriet Dhanak, and Amy Hsu for programming assistance; John Siebs and Maria Sanchez for managing the production of data on interviewers for the National Election Studies; and Cynthia Buckley, Ellen Gordon, and Victoria Velkoff for research assistance. The authors appreciate the helpful advice of Reynolds Farley, Mary Jackman, Robert Jackman, William Mason, Maria Sanchez, Santa Traugott, and John Zaller and are especially indebted to the Survey Research Center for granting permission to obtain the SRC interviewer characteristics data. Data from the SRC/CPS National Election Studies were obtained through the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research. Information about the interviewers was provided by the Survey Research Center of the University of Michigan. The authors paid for the SRC's services from research funds provided by the Population Studies Center of the University of Michigan. None of these individuals or organizations bears any responsibility for these analyses or conclusions.

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> of 1964, 1976, 1980, and 1984 who lived in predominantly black neighborhoods and who were interviewed by black interviewers were more likely to report falsely that they voted than black respondents interviewed by white interviewers. Black respondents in black neighborhoods who were interviewed by black interviewers were also more likely *actually* to vote and to endorse civic norms than blacks interviewed by whites. Hence, matching the respondent and the interviewer by race not only generates *response effects*—error in the answers—but also, for many black respondents, it appears to *induce changes in actual behavior.*

The American National Election Studies conducted by the Survey Research Center and Center for Political Studies of the University of Michigan are the most important single source of survey data for monitoring change in the American electorate. Therefore, it is important to establish whether the National Election Study (NES) data register real change rather than change in the measuring instrument. This research focuses on the effects of the race of the interviewer on responses by blacks in NES surveys. No previous studies of interviewer effects on NES results have been published.

Previous research demonstrates that whether the respondent and the interviewer are of the same race affects responses on items related to race, such as expressed hostility or closeness toward members of different racial groups (Schuman and Converse, 1971; Schuman and Hatchett, 1974). Race-of-interviewer effects have not been studied for NES surveys partly because interviewer characteristics are not included in the data files distributed by the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research.

Researchers have also paid little attention to other sources of response error in the NES surveys that could be confounded with interviewer effects, such as the effect of the interview–reinterview format of the presidential-year studies and of the major panel studies in 1956–1958–1960 and 1972–1974–1976.[1] Interest in the unintended effects of the survey method has been intensified by the extremely high level of self-reported voting among NES respondents. This may be partly an artifact of respondent selectivity and partly a vote-stimulation effect of the preelection interviews conducted in presidential election years.[2]

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1. Effects of the form or context of the interview that have been examined include the presence of third parties in the interview (Silver, Abramson, and Anderson, 1986), and the use of telephone rather than in-person interviews (Shanks, Sanchez, and Morton, 1983).

2. On the possibility of vote-stimulation by the preelection interviews, see Clausen, 1968, and Traugott and Katosh, 1979. For a study of this phenomenon not based on NES data, see Yalch, 1976.

Analyses of the NES vote validation data have revealed that between 20% and 30% of respondents who did not actually vote report to the interviewer that they voted. This response bias appears to be a consequence of the respondents' tendency to exaggerate their conformity with socially approved norms, especially if they personally endorse those norms (Silver, Abramson, and Anderson, 1986; Silver, Anderson, and Abramson, 1986).[3] Race is the *respondent* characteristic that has been reported most often as linked to vote overreporting, that is, to less valid self-reported behavior. Blacks are more likely to overreport voting than whites (for a summary of the evidence, see Abramson and Claggett, 1984, 1986; Silver, Anderson, and Abramson, 1986; Anderson and Silver, 1986). Hence, it is appropriate to examine whether this race difference in responses is related to the race of the interviewer.

To increase our understanding of the effects of the race of the interviewer in NES surveys, with the cooperation and assistance of the Survey Research Center, we obtained data on the characteristics of interviewers for the five NES surveys for which vote validation studies have been conducted.[4] The vote validation studies provide an external validity check on the accuracy of survey responses. In these years, SRC interviewers or field supervisors checked the local registration and voting records of the survey respondents to determine whether they actually voted.

In addition to examining the relation between the race of the interviewer and the validity of the self-reported vote, we investigate whether the race of the interviewer is related to actual voting behavior and to civic attitudes of black respondents. In light of the evidence by other researchers that preelection interviews stimulate voting, it is important to know whether black interviewers are more likely to stimulate black respondents not only to *say* that they voted but also *actually* to vote. Also, because previous research has shown a positive relation between overreporting of voting and adherence to civic norms such as political efficacy and sense of citizen duty (Silver, Anderson, and Abramson, 1986), the strength of this relation could be affected by exogenous factors that stimulate both reported adherence to civic norms and actual and reported voting.

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[3] Overreporting is not simply an effect of the stimulus of the preelection interview, because it occurs also in surveys in which no preelection survey was conducted. See Silver, Anderson, and Abramson, 1986.

[4] Acquiring information about interviewer characteristics for studies prior to 1978 required original coding of information from personnel files as well as consultation in many instances with the interview booklets. For the 1964 NES, we were not able to obtain interviewer data for those postelection interviewers for whom no identification number was given in the data files. These are all cases in which the postelection interviewer was a different person from the preelection interviewer—about 5% of the cases.

Race of Respondent and Race of Interviewer in the National Election Studies

The conventional wisdom for assigning interviewers by race has been expressed by Backstrom and Hursh-César (1981:243):

> [Race and ethnicity] are important matching characteristics in general population studies. Interviewers who are drawn from the racial/ethnic background to be studied are generally the most successful: blacks are more successful interviewing blacks; whites are more successful interviewing whites (and similarly, Puerto Ricans with Puerto Ricans, American Indians with American Indians, Chinese with Chinese). Where single ethnic groups are clustered in specific neighborhoods or areas, if possible interviewers are used who have matching ethnic characteristics.

This prescription implies that matching interviewer and respondent by race is not only desirable but also the standard procedure for general-purpose surveys, despite the evidence that for most survey questions, this matching probably makes little difference (e.g., Schuman and Converse, 1971; Schuman and Hatchett, 1974). Nor does it reflect the reality of how interviewers are assigned in many major surveys, including NORC's General Social Survey (GSS) (Schaeffer, 1980) and the SRC/CPS National Election Studies.[5]

Figure 1 shows the relation between the race of the interviewer and the race of the respondent in the five NES postelection surveys in which the respondents' vote was validated.[6] In all of the surveys, almost all white respondents were interviewed by whites. Blacks were much more likely to be interviewed by blacks than whites were, but in all five surveys a majority of black respondents were interviewed by whites. In 1964, 43% of blacks were interviewed by blacks, the highest level for any postelection NES survey.[7] By 1984 this percentage dropped to 13%.

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[5] We discussed this matter with several NORC field managers for the GSS in the New York metropolitan area. They try to assign black interviewers to black respondents, but if they do not succeed (because of a shortage of black interviewers), they then try to assign experienced white interviewers to black respondents. We also discussed this with Maria Sanchez, who is director of the Field Section of the Survey Research Center. She reports that for the NES surveys, the primary concern in the assignment of interviewers is to complete the interviews. For this reason, black interviewers are usually assigned to areas in which black respondents are concentrated. But there is no policy of matching the race of interviewers and respondents. According to Sanchez, the reduction over time in the proportion of interviews of blacks that are conducted by black interviewers (shown in Figures 1 and 2) reflects the increasing difficulty of recruiting black women for the kind of part-time and intermittent work that interviewing normally entails.

[6] A vote validation study was conducted also for the 1986 NES, but the data are not yet available for analysis.

[7] In the 1964 *pre*election NES survey, 47% of black respondents were interviewed by blacks. For the years 1972–1977, for which we have information about the race of interviewers and respondents from the NORC GSS (Schaeffer, 1980), black respondents

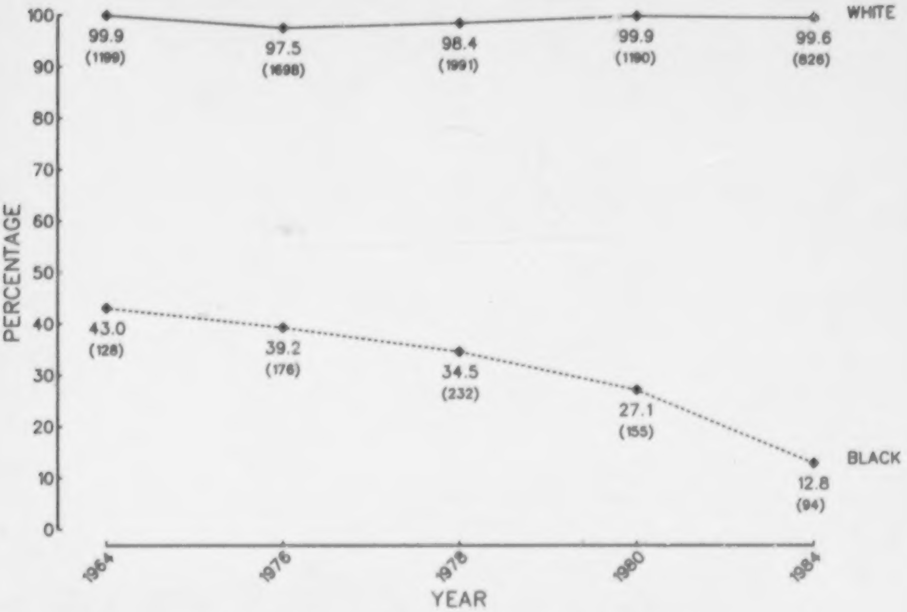

Figure 1. Percentage of Black and of White Respondents Interviewed by Members of Same Race in Postelection NES. *Note:* The number of respondents of the given race at the given date is shown in parentheses.

Thus, the assignment of interviewers by race in NES surveys does not follow the procedure recommended by Backstrom and Hursh-César. More important, if the race of the interviewer does influence response patterns, there is considerable potential for confounding trends in survey responses by blacks with trends in the racial composition of the interviewer staff.

Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo (1985:153) point out that the percentage of black respondents who come from the South has not changed much in NES surveys, and hence trends in black racial attitudes cannot be explained by shifts in the regional composition of the sample. However, to test for the effects of the race of the interviewer, we must take into account the possibility that the race of the interviewer is systematically related to respondent characteristics, including the distribution of respondents by region. For example, as shown in Figure 2, the

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in the GSS were substantially more often interviewed by blacks than black respondents in the SRC National Election Studies of either 1964 or 1976. Thus, for items that are sensitive to the race of the interviewer, direct comparison of results from the GSS and the NES must be made with caution.

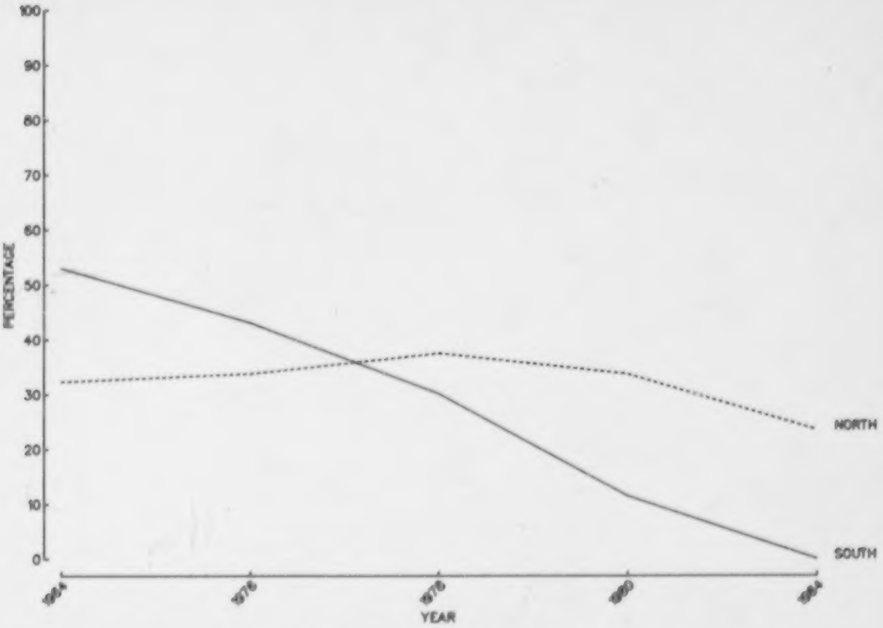

Figure 2. Percentage of Black Respondents Interviewed by Blacks in Postelection NES, by Region

proportion of southern blacks who were interviewed by blacks has declined markedly, from 54% in 1964 to less than 10% in 1984.[8] In contrast, among blacks in the North, the proportion interviewed by blacks has declined only moderately. Consequently, if there is a relation between respondents' attitudes and their region of residence, it could be confounded by a change in the racial composition of the interviewer staff.

Similarly, it is important to control for possible effects of the neighborhood in which respondents reside, particularly because, as we shall show, the assignment of interviewers by race is related to neighborhood racial composition. The NES surveys provide considerable information about the respondents' socioeconomic status, but little information about the characteristics of their neighborhoods. Earlier surveys provided more of this kind of information than more recent ones. For 1964 and 1976, we have information about the racial (black–white) composition of the neighborhood based on the respondent's

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[8] We use the terms "non-South" and "North" interchangeably. We label as "South" the states classified as "Solid South" in ICPSR codebooks: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia. These include all states of the old Confederacy except Tennessee. In the SRC samples, the Primary Sampling Units (PSUs) in Tennessee are selected to represent the Border States rather than the Solid South.

Table 1. Reported Racial Composition of Neighborhood, by Region and by Race of Interviewer, in 1964 and 1976 NES Preelection Surveys

	North		South		Total	
Racial Composition of Neighborhood	White Int.	Black Int.	White Int.	Black Int.	White Int.	Black Int.
1964						
All white	79.0%	3.8%	84.2%	1.3%	80.0%	2.5%
Mostly white	17.4	10.1	10.5	3.8	16.1	7.0
Half and half	2.6	25.3	4.9	11.5	3.0	18.5
Mostly black	1.0	46.8	0.4	29.5	0.9	38.2
All black	0.0	13.9	0.0	53.8	0.0	33.8
Total percent	100.0%	99.9%	100.0%	99.9%	100.0%	100.0%
Base *N*	1124	79	266	78	1390	157
1976						
All white	63.4%	0.0%	57.5%	0.0%	62.2%	0.0%
Mostly white	31.6	15.1	33.8	7.0	32.1	10.9
Half and half	4.1	22.6	6.9	12.2	4.7	17.2
Mostly black	0.9	50.9	1.5	33.9	1.0	42.1
All black	0.0	11.3	0.2	47.0	0.1	29.9
Total percent	100.0%	99.9%	99.9%	100.1%	100.0%	100.0%
Base *N*	1550	106	405	115	1955	221

NOTES: The question about the racial composition of the neighborhood was worded as follows in 1976: "Is this neighborhood you now live in all white, mostly white, about half white and half black, mostly black, or all black?" The data for 1964 in this and later tables exclude cases in the "Negro Supplement." Cases for which data are missing, or in which respondent and interviewer are not white or black, are excluded. For 1964, for 88 cases no postelection interviewer information was available.

self-report. For these surveys, we can discern the pattern of interviewer assignment by racial composition of the neighborhood. But analogous information was not collected in later NES surveys, and information identifying the census tract within which the respondents reside is masked in the available data to protect the respondents' confidentiality.

Table 1 reports the racial distribution of the interviewers by the reported racial composition of the neighborhood and by region for the 1964 and 1976 preelection surveys. Although there may be some error in the reported racial composition of the neighborhoods, Table 1 shows a clear pattern of assigning interviewers to neighborhoods on the basis of race.[9] The assignment of interviewers in NES surveys appears to fit the pattern described by Schaeffer (1980) for the NORC General Social Survey in the 1970s. Black interviewers are assigned almost exclusively to areas where black respondents are expected to be found. Any whites interviewed by blacks are likely to be residents of predominantly black or racially mixed neighborhoods. Essentially only white interviewers are assigned to exclusively white neighborhoods, but many white interviewers are assigned to black neighborhoods (this must be so for recent NES surveys).

Because we do not have information about the racial composition of the neighborhoods for all five of the NES surveys that we analyze, we use a proxy variable for this purpose. For all surveys, we can classify respondents according to whether they lived in a central city of a metropolitan area, another part of a metropolitan area, or a nonmetropolitan area (which includes small cities and towns as well as rural areas).[10] Based on evidence from 1964 and 1976, for blacks outside the South, whether or not respondents resided in a central city rather than in another part of a metropolitan area or in a nonmetropolitan area is strongly related to whether they lived in mostly black or all-black neighborhoods (data not shown). Hence, for all five surveys, for *northern* black respondents, we will use residence in a central city as a proxy for residence in a predominantly black neighborhood. For *southern* blacks, a large majority of all respondents, regardless of the type of place in which they resided, lived in neighborhoods that were mostly black or all black.

In an experimental design to test for race-of-interviewer effects, one would assign black and white interviewers randomly to black respondents (or to areas where there is a high probability that the respondents will be black). This strategy was pursued by Schuman and Converse, for example, in the 1968 Detroit Area Study. In the nonexperimental design afforded by the NES surveys, because of collinearity between the interview context and the race of the interviewer, any relation between the race of the interviewer and response patterns could be confounded with neighborhood effects. Nonetheless, in recent NES surveys, a substantial number of blacks who lived in central cities of metropolitan areas were interviewed by whites.[11]

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[9] Schuman and Converse (1971) report in their study based in Detroit in 1968 that whether black respondents answered "yes" to the question "Were there any white students in the schools you attended?" was sensitive to whether the interviewer was white or black. Hence, how respondents described the racial composition of their neighborhoods in the NES surveys could also be affected by the race of the interviewer.

[10] This classification is based on the "belt code" variable reported for each study.

[11] See footnote 14 for a discussion of additional implications of the sample design for the interpretation of our results.

Validity of the Self-Reported Vote

To examine whether the race of the interviewer affects the *accuracy* of answers, we compare the respondent's self-report in the postelection survey to the respondent's validated vote based on a check of local registration and voting records.[12] The validation procedure itself is not error-free and has improved in later administrations (Traugott and Katosh, 1979; Katosh and Traugott, 1981). Despite this, there is a great deal of consistency over time in the patterns of misreporting (Abramson and Claggett, 1984, 1986; Silver, Anderson, and Abramson, 1986).

In this part of the analysis, we use as our measure of misreporting the percentage of validated nonvoters who claimed (falsely) that they voted. *Nonvoters* are the respondents who are at risk of misreporting, because they are subject to the social stigma of failing to conform to the civic norm of voting. Validated *voters*, on the other hand, almost never report in surveys that they did not vote.[13]

Panel A of Table 2 shows that in all five of the vote validation studies, black nonvoters were more likely to overreport voting than white nonvoters. Except in the 1978 midterm NES study, at least 30% of black nonvoters reported that they voted. It is also helpful to examine differences by region. Since a much larger proportion of black respondents than white respondents resides in the South, some of the racial difference could be a result of a regional difference. Southerners in general have had lower voting turnout than northerners (Wolfinger and Rosenstone, 1980; Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde, 1986), so that the stigma attached to nonvoting may not be as great in the South.

The results in panel B of Table 2 are consistent with our expectation. Although regional differences in overreporting by whites are small, except in 1984 southern white nonvoters were consistently less likely to overreport voting than northern whites. Among black nonvoters, southerners were also consistently less likely to overreport voting than northerners, and the differences are much greater than among whites.

Table 3 shows the extent of overreporting broken down by race of respondent and race of interviewer. We shall focus on the race-of-interviewer effects on black respondents. As shown in panel A, in the last three presidential-year elections, blacks interviewed by blacks were more likely to overreport voting. That is, for blacks, responses were *less valid* when the race of the interviewer and the race of the respondent were matched than when they were not. In 1964 and 1978,

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[12] See the Appendix for information on the coding of the vote validation variables and on the wording of the postelection question about whether the respondent voted.

[13] For further discussion of the issues involved, see Anderson and Silver, 1986; and Silver, Anderson, and Abramson, 1986.

Table 2. Percent of Validated Nonvoters Who Report That They Voted, by Race of Respondent and by Region, 1964, 1976, 1978, 1980, 1984

Race of Resp.	Region of Resp.	1964		1976[a]		1978		1980		1984[a]	
		Pct.	Base *N*	Pct.	Base *N*	Pct.	Base *N*	Pct.	Base *N*	Pct.	Base *N*
A											
White		27.1	280	30.6	582	22.0	1058	27.2	416	24.0	262
Black		30.8	52	39.1	87	26.4	163	30.9	68	30.5	59
B											
White	North	28.8	212	31.1	427	22.6	767	27.9	297	23.4	192
White	South	22.1	68	29.0	155	20.6	291	25.2	119	25.7	70
Black	North	50.0	18	42.4	33	29.3	82	33.3	42	42.9	28
Black	South	20.6	34	37.0	54	23.5	81	26.9	26	19.4	31

NOTE: For the procedures used to construct the vote validation variables, see the Appendix.

[a] Cases in which the postelection interview was conducted by telephone are excluded. For *all* 1984 nonvoters, the percentage of nonvoters who reported that they voted was 24.5 for whites and 31.5 for blacks. For persons interviewed by telephone in the postelection survey, the corresponding percentages were 24.9 for whites and 32.7 for blacks.

Table 3. Percent of Validated Nonvoters Who Report That They Voted, by Race of Respondent, Race of Interviewer, and Region, 1964, 1976, 1978, 1980, 1984

Race of:		1964		1976		1978		1980		1984	
Resp.	Interv.	Pct.	Base *N*	Pct.	Base *N*	Pct.	Base *N*	Pct.	Base *N*	Pct.	Base *N*
A											
White	White	26.5	253	30.1	564	21.7	1026	26.7	405	23.7	253
White	Black	—	0	50.0	14	43.8	16	—	1	—	0
Black	White[a]	33.3	21	32.2	59	27.1	107	23.4	47	31.1	45
Black	Black[a]	18.2	22	53.6	28	25.5	55	50.0	16	42.9	7
B											
North											
Black	White	45.5	11	41.7	24	28.0	50	32.0	25	50.0	18
Black	Black	66.7	3	44.4	9	32.3	31	38.5	13	42.9	7
South											
Black	White	20.0	10	25.7	35	26.3	57	13.6	22	18.5	27
Black	Black	10.5	19	57.9	19	16.7	24	100.0	3	—	0

NOTE: Data are restricted to cases in which interviewers were either white or black.

[a] The total number of black and white *interviewers* who interviewed blacks in the postelection surveys were: 1964—14 black, 20 white; 1976—14 black, 43 white; 1978—18 black, 53 white; 1980—7 black, 44 white; 1984—4 black, 29 white (in-person interviews only).

however, blacks who were interviewed by whites were more likely to overreport voting than blacks interviewed by blacks; in those years, responses given to black interviewers were *more valid* than responses given to white interviewers. We think there are substantive reasons for the different response patterns for the different elections, and we will discuss them below.

Panel B of Table 3 shows the extent of overreporting of voting by black nonvoters, classified simultaneously by region and by the race of the interviewer. In every survey except 1984, northern blacks overreported voting more often when interviewed by black interviewers than when interviewed by white interviewers. In contrast, for southern blacks the relation between the race of the interviewer and the extent of overreporting of voting differs greatly from one election to the next. In 1964, black interviewers were more likely to elicit accurate reports of voting from southern black respondents than were white interviewers. This result is probably due to the fact that this election preceded the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Before the Voting Rights Act, it would have made little sense for disenfranchised black respondents in the South to claim that they voted. It would have been especially odd for disenfranchised blacks to report falsely that they had voted when the interviewer was a black who, the respondent could assume, understood political reality.

There are reasons why blacks in the 1978 survey would not have felt a strong motivation to overreport voting. Midterm elections usually offer lower incentives for both blacks and whites to vote, particularly in the South, and overall turnout in the 1978 election was extremely low (Burnham, 1982). Nonetheless, in the 1978 NES there appears to be a slightly greater tendency for northern black respondents to overreport voting when interviewed by a black than when interviewed by a white; but the relation is reversed among southern black respondents.

Multivariate Test for Race-of-Interviewer Effects on Vote Overreporting

RATIONALE

Overreporting of voting does not occur only among blacks. Nor is it an inevitable consequence of the survey method. Previous research has shown that overreporting occurs primarily among respondents who are politically mobilized or who have a normative commitment to voting. Respondents who declare that they expect to vote, have a strong sense of civic duty, are interested in the campaign, are concerned about the election outcome, have strong partisan loyalties, and are more highly educated are not only likely *actually* to vote. If for some reason they do not vote, they are likely to report falsely after the election that they did vote (see Silver, Abramson, and Anderson, 1986; Silver, Anderson, and Abramson, 1986). In contrast, respondents who declare in a preelection survey that they do not expect to vote in the coming election rarely vote and rarely report after the election that they voted, regardless of the strength of other motivational factors such as partisanship and interest in the campaign.

Because of the small number of black nonvoters in any given NES survey, we shall pool the cases from the presidential election surveys of 1964, 1976, 1980, and 1984.[14] We exclude the 1978 NES because the respondents' *pre*election expectation to vote is a critical variable in the analysis, and the 1978 NES conducted only a postelection survey. We also exclude from the analysis of vote misreporting those cases in the 1984 postelection survey in which the interview was conducted by telephone rather than in person.

In this multivariate analysis, we examine the independent effect of the race of the interviewer. We also examine the effect of the interaction between being interviewed by another black and not living in a predominantly black neighborhood, i.e., living in the North outside of a central city. We also examine the effect of being interviewed by another black on southern blacks who were respondents in the 1964 NES survey, before the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

MODEL SPECIFICATION

We use logit regression because the dependent variable is a binary variable (Aldrich and Nelson, 1984). To construct the dependent variable, validated nonvoters are dichotomized into those who said they voted (coded 1) and those who said they did not vote (coded 0). The logit regression therefore estimates the probability that nonvoters reported falsely in the postelection survey that they voted.

As a first step, we replicated the models estimated by Silver, Anderson, and Abramson (1986), but for black respondents only. We specified a base model in which the dependent variable, False Reporting (FR), is a logit function of whether or not the respondent declared that he or she expected to vote and of this variable jointly with education and two motivational variables, political efficacy and interest in the campaign.[15]

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[14] One potential problem in drawing inferences from the data used in this study is that the small number of black respondents in any NES survey could have come from only a few primary sampling units. Hence, the responses could reflect the peculiar experiences of respondents (or the operations of the survey organization) in a few locations, and differences in the responses from one survey to the next could reflect differences in the PSUs used in the samples. There is also a risk that a small number of *interviewers* could be responsible for most of the apparent interviewer effects. If so, what appear to be race-of-interviewer effects could actually be the effects of a few individual interviewer performances. The risk that either of these factors could account for our results is reduced by the pooling of cases in the remaining part of the analysis. Moreover, examination of the data reveals that the results are not due to the effects of a few PSUs or a few interviewers.

$$\begin{aligned}\text{logit(FR)} = b_0 &+ b_1\text{1964-NES} + b_2\text{1976-NES} + b_3\text{1980-NES}\\ &+ b_4\text{EXPECT}\\ &+ b_5(\text{EXPECT} * \text{COLLEGE})\\ &+ b_6(\text{EXPECT} * \text{HIEFFICACY})\\ &+ b_7(\text{EXPECT} * \text{HIINTEREST})\end{aligned}$$

where FR = 1 if validated nonvoter said he or she voted, 0 if not
1964-NES = 1 if respondent (R) was in the 1964 NES, 0 if not
1976-NES = 1 if R was in the 1976 NES, 0 if not
1980-NES = 1 if R was in the 1980 NES, 0 if not
EXPECT = 1 if R expected to vote, 0 if not
COLLEGE = 1 if R completed some college or more, 0 if not
HIEFFICACY = 1 if R has high external political efficacy, 0 if not
HIINTEREST = 1 if R was very interested in the campaign, 0 if not

The wording of the questions, as well as the procedures for recoding the responses into the variables used in the calculations, is provided in the Appendix.

The effects of education and other variables are expressed as joint effects with expectation of voting (EXPECT), because previous research has shown that such an expectation is a necessary condition for overreporting (Silver, Anderson, and Abramson, 1986). Dummy variables are included for each NES to take into account unmeasured effects of differences between elections that could cause different overall levels of vote overreporting.[16] These effects could include differences in the quality or completeness of the vote validation, or differences in the overall stimulus to overreport voting, including the intensity of mobilization of the black vote.

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[15] This set of independent variables is distilled from an initial set that included additional measures of the motivation to vote (e.g., strength of partisanship, sense of citizen duty, concern about the election outcome). The additional variables were correlated with the measures of political efficacy and interest in the campaign. Partly for this reason, their inclusion in the equations did not improve the goodness of fit of the overall model. Both to reduce redundancy among the correlated independent variables and because logit regression estimates can be based only on cases for which there are no missing data on any of the variables in the equation, we exclude these variables from the equations.

[16] The omitted category is 1984-NES.

RESULTS

The results of the logit regression are shown in Table 4. The *t*-ratio for each coefficient is given in parentheses. Two models are specified. The base model as a whole (column 1) is statistically significant at $p < .001$.[17] Also, the main effect of the EXPECT variable is significant, as are the joint effects of EXPECT and *College Education,* EXPECT and *High Political Efficacy,* and EXPECT and *High Interest* in the campaign. Thus, the basic model accounting for vote overreporting in previous research holds up well when it is tested separately for black respondents. Black nonvoters who are more educated and who have a stronger commitment to the norm of voting are more likely to report that they voted.

The second model (column 2) adds to the initial equation three terms reflecting the joint effects of race of the interviewer, whether the respondent expected to vote, and place of residence. The first added term takes the value of 1 if the respondent was interviewed by a black interviewer and expected to vote, and 0 if not. The coefficient for this term thus reflects the "main effect" of the race of the interviewer. The second added term takes a value of 1 if the respondent was interviewed by a black interviewer *and* expected to vote *and lived in the North but outside a central city,* and the value of 0 if any of these conditions was not true. This term is designed to register the effect of residence outside of a predominantly black neighborhood. The third added term takes the value of 1 if the respondent was in the 1964 NES *and* lived in the South *and* was interviewed by a black interviewer *and* expected to vote, and a value of 0 if any of these conditions was not true. This term is designed to reflect the fact that southern blacks in the pre–Voting Rights Act era were much less likely to vote and less likely to feel an incentive to report to a black interviewer that they voted than were blacks in later presidential election surveys.

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[17] Strictly speaking, the application of standard tests of significance is not appropriate for the type of multistage cluster sample used in NES surveys. Inference from the sample to the population is especially problematic when attention is focused on subclasses or domains of the sample, such as divisions by race and education (Kish, 1980). We employ standard tests of significance (applied to *t*-ratios of regression coefficients or to differences of proportions) for two reasons. First, they provide a minimum criterion for measuring the "signal-to-noise ratio" of a regression coefficient or a difference of proportions. Second, our main concern is not to generalize from the sample to the population of black Americans but instead to determine whether there are systematic (nonrandom) relations between the interviewer's race and the respondent's characteristics (background, behavior, attitudes) *in the NES surveys.* That is, could the relations found within the sample be due to chance alone? This is of special concern because of the small number of cases.

Table 4. Logit Estimates of Probability That Nonvoting Blacks Reported That They Voted, by Education, Commitment to Civic Norms, Race of Postelection Interviewer, and Place of Residence, for the Pooled 1964, 1976, 1980, and 1984 NES Surveys

Independent Variables	(1) Base Model	(2) Base Model Plus Interviewer Race and Place of Residence
Constant	−4.807	−4.535
	(4.539)	(4.270)
1964-NES	−.048	−.168
	(.075)	(.229)
1976-NES	.901	.548
	(1.697)	(.983)
1980-NES	.150	−.266
	(.278)	(.457)
Expect	3.754**	3.570**
	(3.655)	(3.449)
Expect × Some College Education	1.108**	1.116**
	(2.042)	(1.969)
Expect × High Interest	1.101**	.898**
	(2.722)	(2.310)
Expect × High Efficacy	.866**	.980**
	(2.032)	(2.199)
Expect × Black Interviewer		1.716**
		(2.749)
Expect × Black Interviewer × Lived in North, but Not in Central City of SMSA		−3.097** (2.200)
Expect × Black Interviewer × Lived in South × 1964-NES		−2.233* (1.896)
Comparison with constant		
chi-square	105.0	116.6
df	7	10
p	<.001	<.001
Comparison with base model		
chi-square		11.6
df		3
p		<.01
Total *N*	212	212
Aldrich-Nelson Pseudo-R^2	.331	.355

NOTES: *t*-ratios are in parentheses. Significance tests are two-tailed and are omitted for the constant and the NES dummy variables.

* $p < .1$. ** $p < .05$.

In our expanded equation in column 2, the effects of race of the interviewer are expressed only as joint effects with expectation to vote. This specification is suggested both by our previous research on vote validation and by the analysis in this paper concerning the pattern of assignment of interviewers. Simpler specifications (in particular, an additive model) did not provide as good a fit to the data as this one. A variety of alternative specifications, such as one that explicitly included terms expressing the joint effects of race of the interviewer and residence in the South or the North, produced substantively identical results.

The results obtained with our expanded equation confirm that, in general, blacks who were interviewed by black interviewers were more likely to overreport voting than blacks who were interviewed by white interviewers. There are two exceptions. First, the small minority of blacks respondents residing in the North but outside of the central cities were less likely to overreport voting when interviewed by blacks than when interviewed by whites. However, only 13% of all blacks in the pooled sample lived in the North outside of central cities. Second black respondents in the 1964 NES who lived in the South were also less likely to overreport voting when interviewed by black interviewers than when interviewed by white interviewers.

To interpret these results, it is helpful to use the logit regression coefficients in column 2 of Table 4 to derive the estimated probabilities that respondents who actually did not vote (according to the vote validation) reported that they did. For this type of illustration, it is not possible to show the probability for all possible subsets of respondents, because in order to calculate the effects of a given set of variables it is necessary to hold all other variables constant (Aldrich and Nelson, 1984).

Table 5 shows that black nonvoters who were high in both efficacy and interest in the campaign were much more likely to report (falsely) that they did vote than black nonvoters who were low in both efficacy and interest. This pattern is the same as that found earlier for white respondents (Silver, Anderson, and Abramson, 1986).

At the same time, nonvoting black respondents who lived in predominantly black neighborhoods and who were interviewed by blacks were more likely to report that they voted than nonvoting black respondents who were interviewed by whites. For example, among black nonvoters who had low or medium levels of political efficacy and political interest, those who were interviewed by black interviewers and who lived in a northern central city or in the South (other than in 1964) had a .679 probability of reporting that they voted, while otherwise similar blacks who were interviewed by whites had a .276 probability of reporting that they voted. On the whole, the differences due to race of the interviewer

Table 5. Estimated Probabilities That Black Nonvoters Reported That They Voted, by Race of Interviewer, Place of Residence, and Level of Political Efficacy and Interest in the Campaign, for Pooled Respondents from 1964, 1976, 1980, and 1984 NES Surveys

	Respondent's Efficacy and Interest	
Interview Condition	Low or Medium Efficacy Low or Medium Interest	High Efficacy High Interest
Black interviewer and lived in central city of northern SMSA or in South	.679	.931
Black interviewer and lived in North outside of central city	.008	.380
Black interviewer and lived in South and was in 1964 NES	.185	.593
White interviewer	.276	.710

NOTES: The estimates are derived from the equation for column 2 in Table 4. The estimates assume that the respondents were in the 1984 NES, said they expected to vote, and had less than some college education. Fixing these characteristics is necessary in order to estimate the probabilities. See Aldrich and Nelson, 1984.

are comparable in magnitude to the differences due to the level of political efficacy and interest.[18]

Why Should Blacks Overreport Voting More When Interviewed by Blacks?

What kind of social interaction could produce these race-of-interviewer effects? A ''courtesy to a polite stranger'' explanation similar to the one that Schuman and Converse use to explain race-of-interviewer effects on responses to attitude questions seems reasonable. Schuman and Converse (1971:58) wrote that the apparent moderation of statements of interracial hostility when blacks were interviewed by whites could result from a process in which the respondent ''wish[es] to avoid offending a polite stranger who has come into his home for a legitimate reason. To accept a guest into your house and then proceed to explain that you neither trust nor feel friendly toward people of his race probably takes more chutzpah than the average respondent possesses.''

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[18] This estimate of the effects of race of the interviewer is probably conservative, because (as will be shown later) the race of the interviewer also appears to affect the respondents' interest in the campaign.

In the case of reports on political behavior, however, a race-of-interviewer effect could occur because a black interviewer had come to the respondent's home before the election to ask a long series of questions about the upcoming election—about the candidates, the parties, major campaign issues, and the respondent's intention to vote. This polite stranger, or, in rare cases, a different polite stranger, appears shortly after the election to ask even more questions, including whether the respondent voted in the election.[19] For black respondents who are interviewed by blacks, the respondent–interviewer interchange may stimulate concern about how the election outcome could affect the respondent and other members of his or her race, and could stimulate the respondent's sense of civic obligation to vote.[20]

Despite the preelection stimulus, many respondents still do not vote. But black nonvoters who live in black neighborhoods are less likely when asked by a black interviewer than when asked by a white interviewer to pick one of the proffered excuses than to declare after the election that they had voted.[21] This tendency to overreport is more likely to occur when the interview takes place during a major national election campaign that attempts to mobilize the black vote, particularly in predominantly black areas where these efforts are concentrated.

Confounding of Race-of-Interviewer Effects in Studies of Electoral Participation

If our interpretation of vote overreporting as an effect of the motivation to vote is correct, we should expect to find not only that black *nonvoters* overreport voting more often when interviewed by blacks than when interviewed by whites but also that black *respondents* who are interviewed by blacks *actually* vote more frequently than blacks who are interviewed by whites. Moreover, blacks interviewed by blacks should express a stronger commitment to civic norms supportive of electoral participation.

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[19] The same interviewer is likely to administer both the pre- and postelection questionnaire for each respondent. The 1984 election study is unusual in that about half of the postelection interviews were conducted by telephone, in which case the preelection interviewers did not conduct the postelection follow-up. For an examination of the effects of using the same or a different interviewer in the pre- and postelection surveys on vote overreporting, see Silver, Anderson, and Abramson, 1985.

[20] The effects of the race of the interviewer on the respondent's concern about the election outcome and sense of citizen duty are tested later; these effects are in the anticipated direction. The effect of black interviewers interviewing black respondents about the election would likely be greater when the content of the survey focuses more sharply on issues that are especially salient to blacks.

[21] The excuses, designed to soften the perceived threat of the question to the respondent, are built into the question. See the Appendix for the question wording.

This is a strong hypothesis, because on the basis of other evidence one would expect the opposite to be true. Since blacks interviewed by blacks are likely to live in predominantly black neighborhoods, in which the levels of education and income are lower than blacks who live in racially integrated neighborhoods, blacks who are interviewed by blacks tend to have socioeconomic backgrounds that contribute to low electoral participation.

Table 6 tests this hypothesis directly, for the pooled set of black respondents in the 1964, 1976, 1980, and 1984 NES preelection surveys. The respondents are grouped according to their place of residence into three categories: central cities in the northern SMSAs, other places in the North, and the South. The data on race of the interviewers refer to the *pre*election interviewers. Since this part of the analysis focuses on the effects of the preelection interviews, we do not exclude the cases in which the 1984 postelection interviews were conducted by telephone. Also, since the analysis is no longer restricted to validated nonvoters, the *N*s are increased substantially. However, we exclude southern respondents in the 1964 NES from the cases in the South, because, as shown earlier, their behavior is very different from that of southern black respondents in the 1976, 1980, and 1984 NES surveys.[22]

Table 6 supports the hypothesis of race-of-interviewer effects on both actual voting and the endorsement of civic norms *by black respondents who lived in predominantly black areas*. Both blacks who resided in central cities of northern SMSAs and blacks who resided in the South were much more likely actually to vote and to endorse civic norms supportive of voting if they were interviewed in the preelection survey by a black interviewer than if they were interviewed by a white interviewer.

In contrast, blacks residing in other places in the North (in metropolitan areas outside the central city, in small cities and towns, and in rural areas) display an inconsistent response pattern. They were less likely to express interest in the campaign and less likely actually to vote if they were interviewed by a black than if they were interviewed by a white; at the same time, they were more likely to endorse the citizen duty norm and more likely to express concern about which party wins the election if they were interviewed by a black than if they were interviewed by a white.[23]

[22] The number of southern black respondents in the 1964 survey is also too small to permit reliable tests for the effects examined in Table 6. Hence, we do not include a separate category for southern blacks in Table 6.

[23] We do not view the results for northern blacks who resided outside the central cities (13% of all black respondents in the pooled samples) as disconfirmation of the basic finding. The size of the apparent vote-stimulation effect of blacks being interviewed by blacks that we find among the black respondents who lived in northern central cities and

Of the measures of civic attitudes listed in Table 6, only the measure of (external) political efficacy does not conform to the general pattern. Blacks who were interviewed by blacks in the South were *less* likely to be high in political efficacy than blacks who were interviewed by whites (though the difference is not statistically significant—$p = .12$ using a two-tailed test). In contrast, there is no apparent race-of-interviewer effect on political efficacy among blacks in northern central cities.

IMPLICATIONS

These results have implications for the study of black political participation beyond the simple evidence that black respondents are more likely to overreport voting when interviewed by blacks.

First, preelection interviews are strong stimuli to electoral participation for many black respondents if they are interviewed by blacks. Not that the preelection interviews have no effect on white respondents or on black respondents who are interviewed by white interviewers, but the special catalytic effect of the interviews on blacks interviewed by blacks stands out. As shown in Table 6, 63.3% of blacks who resided in central cities of the north who were interviewed by blacks *actually* voted, compared to 51.7% of blacks in those areas who were interviewed by whites. The corresponding figures for southern blacks (excluding respondents in the 1964 NES) were 58.1% and 45.2%. This pattern occurs despite the lower socioeconomic status of blacks who were interviewed by blacks than of blacks who were interviewed by whites in those regions.

Further evidence of this race-of-interviewer effect is reported in Table 7, where each column presents a logit regression equation in which the binary dependent variable is one of the attitudinal measures or the actual voting measure reported in Table 6. The equations are patterned on the equation for column 2 of Table 4. These equations test whether black interviewers were more likely than white interviewers either to elicit expressions of support for civic norms or to induce voting, after adjusting for the respondents' education, place of residence, and survey year.

In the equations in which the term expressing the main effect of black interviewers is statistically significant, the term always has a positive sign. In the equations in which the joint effect of black inter-

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the South (other than in 1964) means that the relationship also holds up for black respondents as a whole. But based on the available evidence, we think it is prudent to interpret the effects of the race of the interviewer as conditioned on the racial composition of the neighborhood.

Table 6. Civic Attitudes, Actual Voting, and Socioeconomic Characteristics of Blacks, by Race of Preelection Interviewer and Place of Residence, for Pooled 1964, 1976, 1980, and 1984 NES Surveys

Dependent Variables	Place of Residence					
	Central City in North		Other Place in North		In South (1976, 1980, 1984)[a]	
	White Int.	Black Int.	White Int.	Black Int.	White Int.	Black Int.
Said expected to vote						
Percent	81.3	85.0	84.1	85.0	80.3	87.7
Base *N*	176	113	69	20	228	65
Actually voted according to vote validation						
Percent	51.7*	63.3*	54.8	33.3	45.2*	58.1*
Base *N*	147	98	62	18	210	62
Had sense of citizen duty[b]						
Percent	43.7**	65.9**	52.5	57.1	37.3**	61.2**
Base *N*	142	88	61	21	233	67
Said very interested in campaign						
Percent	37.8	41.5	24.7	13.0	34.5**	59.4**
Base *N*	180	118	73	23	238	69
Said cared a good deal which party wins election						
Percent	69.1	76.1	59.7*	81.8*	70.8**	88.2**
Base *N*	178	117	72	22	226	68

Were high in political efficacy						
Percent	37.0	33.3	34.4	31.8	35.9	25.4
Base *N*	165	99	64	22	217	63
Had some college education or more						
Percent	30.5	28.8	35.1	21.7	16.7	17.4
Base *N*	190	118	74	23	239	69
Had less than completed high school education						
Percent	39.5	44.9	31.1	19.0	50.6	56.5
Base *N*	190	118	61	21	239	69
Annual family income ($)[c]						
Mean	13367	11617	13711	18914	10088	6625
Median	9125	8750	10500	13000	6000	4500
Base *N*	166	98	68	22	217	64

NOTES: Only black respondents who were interviewed by a black or a white interviewer are included. Differences in proportions (between cases where interviewers were white and where interviewers were black) significant at $p = .1$ using a two-tailed test are marked by a single asterisk (*). Differences in proportions significant at $p = .05$ using a two-tailed test are marked by a double asterisk (**). Significance tests are not shown for education and income variables.

[a] Southern black respondents in the 1964 NES are excluded.

[b] This is based on the single item that was included in the 1984 NES. The citizen duty questions were not included in the 1964 NES. See the Appendix.

[c] Income is reported in intervals in the NES data. In 1964, the top (open) category was $15,000 or over; in 1976, it was $35,000 or over; in 1980, $50,000 or over; in 1984, $75,000 or over. To calculate the mean and median, incomes in the top category were assumed to be $5,000 above the lower bound for that category. Incomes in the lowest category were assumed to be $500 below the upper bound for that category. Incomes in all other ranges were assumed to be at the midpoint of the range. Adopting plausible alternative assumptions about the distributions of income within categories would not have affected the conclusions based on comparisons of incomes of blacks interviewed by white or black interviewers.

Table 7. Logit Estimates of Probability That Black Respondents Held Certain Civic Attitudes or Actually Voted, by Education, Place of Residence, and Race of Preelection Interviewer, for Pooled 1964, 1976, 1980, and 1984 NES Surveys

	Dependent Variable					
Independent Variables	Said Expected to Vote	Actually Voted	Had Sense of Citizen Duty	Was Highly Interested in Campaign	Said Cared Which Party Wins	Was High in Political Efficacy
Constant	1.369	−.303	−.726	−1.010	.740	−.672
	(7.186)	(1.902)	(4.710)	(6.360)	(4.636)	(4.396)
1964-NES	.026	.714	—[a]	.676	.360	−.445
	(.082)	(2.597)		(2.801)	(1.321)	(1.745)
1976-NES	−.387	−.068	.141	.320	−.213	−.324
	(1.530)	(.314)	(.691)	(1.547)	(.987)	(1.434)
1980-NES	.294	.069	.808	.021	.146	−.170
	(.969)	(.313)	(3.727)	(.126)	(.614)	(.758)
Some College Ed.	.610**	.751**	.507**	.684**	.067	.785**
	(2.295)	(3.833)	(2.603)	(3.768)	(.336)	(4.233)

Black Interviewer	.493*	.501**	.870**	.515**	.678**	−.129
	(1.922)	(2.538)	(4.265)	(2.847)	(3.134)	(.623)
Black Interv. × Lived in North Outside Central City	−.375	−1.247**	−.390	−1.935**	.030	−.193
	(.556)	(2.325)	(.804)	(2.989)	(.055)	(.386)
Black Interv. × Lived in South × 1964 NES	−1.734**	−2.617**	—[a]	−.132	−.044	−.305
	(3.790)	(4.289)		(.338)	(.083)	(.617)
Comparison with:						
Constant						
chi-square	30.4	47.4	44.0	43.5	19.6	29.2
df	7	7	5	7	7	7
p	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.01	<.001
Model Excluding Race-of-Interviewer Terms						
chi-square	14.9	28.6	19.1	16.8	12.5	1.5
df	3	3	2	3	3	3
p	<.01	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.01	<.70
Total *N*	743	647	609	775	754	704
Aldrich-Nelson Pseudo-R^2	.039	.068	.067	.053	.025	.040

Note: *t*-ratios are in parentheses.

[a] The citizen duty items were not included in the 1964 NES.

* $p < .05$ (one-tailed test). ** $p < .05$ (two-tailed test).

viewers and living in the north outside of a central city is statistically significant, the term always has a negative sign. Similarly, the coefficients for the term expressing the effect of being a southern respondent in the 1964 NES are also always negative. Thus, black interviewers in central cities of northern SMSAs and in the South (other than in 1964) are more likely to elicit from black respondents an endorsement of civic norms (a statement of intention to vote, sense of citizen duty, expression of interest in the campaign) and more likely to induce actual voting than are either white interviewers in general or black interviewers in the North outside of the central cities.

A second implication of these findings is that survey-based comparisons of black and white electoral participation must be alert to possible race-of-interviewer effects. Race differences in reported civic attitudes and participation, as well as race differences in actual levels of participation, can be affected by the assignment of interviewers by race. The same stricture applies to comparisons of black electoral participation by region or by other attributes that are related to the probability that the respondent will be interviewed by a black or a white interviewer. If the race of the interviewer affects responses to civic attitude questions as well as the probability that black respondents actually vote, then the correlations between civic attitudes, actual electoral participation, and reported electoral participation will be different among black survey respondents than they are in the black population.[24]

A third implication is that if one plans to study change in black political participation using either panel data or cross-sectional data, one must take into account the proportion of black respondents in each wave of the panel or in each survey who were interviewed by blacks. Since the racial composition of the interviewer staff for the NES surveys has changed substantially over time, trends in civic attitudes and electoral participation among black respondents are probably partly an artifact of trends in the racial composition of the interviewers.

ARE THERE ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS FOR THESE RESULTS?

It is difficult to conceive of a plausible explanation for these results other than that they result from race-of-interviewer effects. One explanation that can be rejected is that blacks interviewed by blacks in the recent presidential election year surveys were more highly educated or had higher incomes than blacks interviewed by whites. As Table 6 shows, neither of these conditions was true for black respondents from the South or from central cities in the North. Furthermore, as shown in Table 7, even after the respondents' education is taken directly into account, the effect of the race of the interviewer remains.

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[24] A related finding, which we cannot discuss in detail, is that the vote-stimulation effect found among black respondents interviewed by black interviewers is much stronger among female respondents than among males, though it occurs for both sexes. Since the vast majority of interviewers are females, the interviewer–respondent interaction that produces the pattern of responses that we have analyzed may be partly a product of the interviewer's sex. These results also mean that the reported findings, based on NES data, that black women are more politicized than black men (Baxter and Lansing, 1983), could be an artifact of the race and sex composition of the interviewers.

Another type of sample selectivity that could account for the results is that blacks interviewed by blacks could be self-selected on the basis of their political interest and involvement. Given the declining response rates in surveys in central cities in recent years, it is possible that those black respondents who do participate in surveys are relatively highly politically involved, and that blacks in central cities who are interviewed by blacks are especially likely to be self-selected as being highly politically involved. That this hypothesized selectivity by race of the interviewer is not correlated with selectivity on the basis of socioeconomic status, however, calls this explanation into question.

Although we cannot completely rule out a "self-selection of the politically involved" explanation, we think it is implausible. If such systematic selectivity by race of the interviewer does occur, however, it should be regarded as partly an effect of the race of the interviewer. A more plausible explanation is that blacks in the South and in northern central cities have been mobilized to vote in recent presidential elections, and that lengthy survey interviews conducted in the midst of the campaign, particularly by black interviewers, further stimulate their concern about the electoral outcome.

That this is an effect of *preelection interviews in presidential election years* is bolstered by evidence that the relationships shown in Table 6 for the pooled 1964–1976–1980–1984 respondents are not found in the 1978 NES survey, which consisted only of a postelection survey in a midterm election year. For example, in the 1978 NES, 26.3% of black respondents in northern central cities who were interviewed by blacks actually voted (according to the vote validation), compared to 39.3% of blacks who were interviewed by whites (data not shown). Thus in 1978 the relation between the race of the interviewer and the percentage of black respondents who voted in northern central cities was the reverse of that found among the pooled sample from the four presidential election surveys. Whether the difference in the results is an outcome of the absence of a preelection survey in 1978, the low saliency of the election, or the combination of these factors, cannot be determined from available data.[25]

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[25] One way to sort out the relative importance of the two factors in NES surveys would be to include a supplemental sample of respondents (both blacks and whites) who were interviewed only in the postelection survey in a presidential election year.

Conclusions

Most survey data are the product of an interview. In such cases, the stimulus is the *interviewer* reading a question, showing a visual aid, and probing for an answer. Hence, when differences in interviewer characteristics are systematically related to the responses, changes in interviewer characteristics can produce systematic changes in survey results.

Our research suggests that the variety of survey responses that are affected by the race of the interviewer is greater than has been assumed. In particular, race-of-interviewer effects confound the study of some political attitudes and behavior that have no overt racial content.

More important, our analysis suggests that matching the respondent and the interviewer by race does not simply generate *response effects*—error in the answers (Sudman and Bradburn, 1974; Bradburn, 1983). Rather, for many black respondents, the preelection interview appears to *induce changes in stated attitudes and actual behavior.*

To assure comparability of data from one survey to the next, or from one survey subpopulation to another, any large and systematic source of variation needs to be examined and, if possible, controlled either when the data are produced or when they are analyzed. If the public-use National Election Study and General Social Survey data files included information about the characteristics of interviewers, researchers could then check for, and possibly correct for, some kinds of interviewer effects.[26]

This analysis also demonstrates that the stimulus to electoral participation from the preelection interview affects not only the reported percentages of respondents who vote but also measures of civic attitudes—measures that are frequently employed to explain the level of turnout. To date, researchers who have expressed concern about the implausibly high reported and validated turnout among NES respondents have been concerned only about the error in the measurement of turnout. However, when the preelection interview stimulates the respondent's concern about the electoral outcome, increases the respondent's sense of civic duty, and increases the likelihood that the respondent will actually vote, it inflates not only the reported and actual vote turnout relative to that of the population from which the sample is drawn, but also the reported strength of the interrelations among all variables that are so stimulated—compared to the "true" interrelations among those variables in the population. This is a problem in the analysis of political participation of both blacks and whites based on NES surveys.

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[26] We propose the provision of information on a few interviewer characteristics: race, sex, age, education, and years of experience as an interviewer (or years of experience with the current survey organization).

Appendix: Question Wording, Recoding Procedures, and Construction of Composite Variables

Vote validation. Although the SRC's coding of self-reported electoral participation is consistent across time, the codes used for the vote validation variable differ from year to year. Only the coding for 1978 is free of ambiguities. The procedures for constructing the vote validation measures for 1964, 1976, 1978, and 1980 are spelled out in Abramson and Claggett, 1984. For the 1984 survey, we use Variable 1132, the summary measure for the individual voter record validation. Respondents coded 1 are classified as voters, while respondents coded 2, 3, 10, 12, 13, and 14 are classified as nonvoters. All other codes are classified as Not Ascertained (missing).

The first two vote validation studies (1964 and 1976) attempted to determine the registration and voting status only for respondents to the postelection survey. The 1978 NES (as with all midterm NES surveys from 1958 on) included only a postelection survey. However, in both 1980 and 1984 the SRC/CPS attempted to validate the votes of all respondents to the preelection survey, including those who were not in the postelection survey. For the study of vote overreporting, we cannot use respondents who were not in the postelection surveys. Therefore, we exclude from our analysis of vote overreporting respondents who were not in the postelection surveys.

External political efficacy. The items are:

> People like me don't have any say about what the government does.
> I don't think public officials care much what people like me think.

Respondents who disagreed with both items are scored as "High"; those who agreed with one but disagreed with the other are scored as "Medium"; and those who agreed with both are scored as "Low." Respondents with DK or NA responses to one of these questions are scored as high or low according to their response on the remaining item. Those with DK or NA responses to both items are scored as missing. The same scoring was employed by Abramson and Aldrich (1982:510) and Abramson (1983:166–167).

Citizen duty. Only one of the four standard citizen duty items was asked in the 1984 NES (see Abramson, Silver, and Anderson, 1987):

> If a person doesn't care how an election comes out he [then that person] shouldn't vote in it.

"Disagree" responses are scored as 1, "Agree" response as 0. DK and NA responses are treated as missing. We use only this single item in the pooled data analysis based on the 1976, 1980, and 1984 NES surveys.

Political interest. In the presidential election surveys, the item is:

> Some people don't pay much attention to the political campaigns. How about you, would you say that you have been very much interested, some-

> what interested, or not very much interested in following the political campaigns so far this year?

Respondents who are "Very much interested" are labeled "High"; those who are "Somewhat interested" are labeled "Medium"; and those who are "Not much interested" are labeled "Low." Responses coded DK or NA are treated as missing.

Concern about electoral outcome. The item is:

> Generally speaking, would you say that you personally care a good deal which party wins the presidential election this fall or that you don't care very much which party wins?

The responses to this item are collapsed into two categories: "High Concern" and "Low Concern." "Care a good deal" is labeled as "High," "Don't care very much" as "Low." Answers coded DK or NA are treated as missing.

Expectation of voting. In preelection surveys, respondents were asked:

> So far as you know now, do you expect to vote in November or not?

All affirmative answers are collapsed into a single "Yes" category (scored as 1); negative answers are recoded as "No" (0). "Pro–con, depends," DK, and NA are treated as missing.

Self-report of voting. In the postelection surveys, the item was:

> In talking to people about elections, we often find that a lot of people were not able to vote because (they weren't old enough) they weren't registered, they were sick, or they just didn't have time. How about you—did you vote in the elections this November?

Answer coded "Not old enough," "R refused to say whether voted," DK, or NA are scored as missing.

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UNDERREPORTING OF SUBSTANCE USE IN A NATIONAL LONGITUDINAL YOUTH COHORT

INDIVIDUAL AND INTERVIEWER EFFECTS

BARBARA S. MENSCH AND
DENISE B. KANDEL

Abstract The quality of drug data in the 1984 wave of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth is explored. Comparisons with other national surveys indicate that underreporting of use of illicit drugs other than marijuana appears to have taken place, and that light users of these drugs are underrepresented among the self-acknowledged users. Comparison with marijuana use reported four years earlier indicates that experimental marijuana users are much less likely than extensive users to acknowledge involvement. Even after controlling for frequency of use, underreporting is more common among terminal high school dropouts and minorities. Not only individual characteristics but field conditions also contribute to underreporting. Familiarity with the interviewer, as measured by number of prior interviewing contacts, depresses drug use reporting. We speculate that interviewer familiarity increases salience of normative standards and that participants respond not only in terms of their past familiarity but also in terms of their subjective expectations regarding the probability of a future encounter with the interviewer.

BARBARA S. MENSCH was in the School of Public Health, College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University when this research was carried out. DENISE B. KANDEL is in the School of Public Health and in the Department of Psychiatry, College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University, and at the New York State Psychiatric Institute. This research was partially supported by grants DA03525 and Research Scientist Award DA00081 (D. Kandel) from the National Institute on Drug Abuse and Center Grant MHCRC-MH-30906 from the National Institute of Mental Health (to the New York State Psychiatric Institute, New York). The research assistance of David Trail is gratefully acknowledged. The authors are indebted to Peter Mossel and Victoria Raveis for criticial comments on an earlier version of the manuscript. Address requests for reprints or copies of the drug use questions used in this study to D. Kandel, Box 20, 722 W. 168th Street, New York, NY 10032.

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The quality of data involving self-reports of deviant, disapproved, or illegal behaviors has been a recurrent concern of survey researchers (Hindelang, Hirschi, and Weis, 1981; Huizinga and Elliott, 1984; O'Malley, Bachman, and Johnston, 1983; Bachman and O'Malley, 1981; Bradburn et al., 1978). With the proliferation over the last fifteen years of surveys on the use of illicit drugs, this concern has focused in particular on the nature of drug use reports. The consensus among drug researchers has been that most reports, based either on self-administered questionnaires, whether numerically identifiable or anonymous, or personal interviews with or without self-administered forms, are valid and reliable (Ball, 1967; Malvin and Moskowitz, 1983; Robins, 1973; Haberman et al., 1972; Robins and Murphy, 1967; Single, Kandel, and Johnson, 1975; Rouse, Kozel, and Richards, 1985). Methods to establish validity include comparison of self-reported drug use with independent urine samples, internal construct validity, or similarity of best friends' reports. In particular, underreporting has been thought not to be a problem, although there may be telescoping of recall such that respondents tend to report proportionally more drug use within the last 30 days than they do for the prior 12 months (Bachman and O'Malley, 1981). However, this pattern is neither strongly nor consistently associated with any respondent characteristics (O'Malley, Bachman, and Johnston, 1983). In our own research, we established that adolescents were unlikely to underreport their use of marijuana and other illicit drugs and that underreporting, to the extent that it occurred, was due to the apparent forgetting of those who had experimented with the drugs only once or twice rather than to denial by heavy users (Single, Kandel, and Johnson, 1975).

Some survey researchers, however, have expressed reservations about the quality of reporting of drug use. In a national sample of 1,172 adults conducted by NORC in 1975, questions on illegal and socially undesirable behaviors, including drug use, induced respondent anxiety. Those who were particularly uneasy (over 40% for a question on lifetime prevalence of marijuana use) were less inclined to report involvement (Bradburn et al., 1978). Type of setting (private vs. not private), type of sample (addict vs. not addict), type of question (current use vs. past use), and degree of social undesirability (marijuana vs. heroin) were mentioned in a recent report by the National Institute on Drug Abuse on validity issues in self-reported drug use data as being potentially threatening to accuracy and completeness of drug reporting (Rouse, Kozel, and Richards, 1985).

We here report the results of a study based on the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY) in which serious and somewhat unexpected underreporting of the use of certain drugs appears to have taken place. The study was executed to generate epidemiological data on the prevalence of illicit drugs for groups in the population that had heretofore not been included in sufficiently large numbers to provide such estimates, in particular, minorities and school dropouts. Indeed, the NLS Youth Cohort is the most comprehensive extant sample of young people in the United States.

Factors, both individual and contextual, underlying the underreporting are presented. We find that the underreporting is not randomly distributed in the sample but is more prominent among certain social groups, generally those found in prior epidemiological surveys to have lower prevalence rates of self-reported use. Furthermore, it is affected by specific features of the interview situation, in particular, degree of familiarity with the interviewer. It appears that underreporting is more likely to occur when individual attributes or factors within the interview increase respondents' propensity to provide socially normative responses. The implications of the findings for survey research are discussed.

Data Source

SAMPLE AND DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

In 1984, five minutes of drug-related questions were added to the interview schedule administered to participants in the sixth wave of the ongoing Youth Cohort (NLSY), a national longitudinal survey of 12,069 young adults conducted since 1979 by the Center for Human Resource Research of Ohio State University (Wolpin, 1983). The Youth Cohort sample is a multistage stratified area probability sample representative of individuals born in the years 1957–1964 in the coterminous United States. The study includes youths who are usually not well represented in national samples—not only members of minority groups but also high school dropouts and the unemployed. Blacks (*N* = 2,172), Hispanics (*N* = 1,480), and economically disadvantaged white youths (*N* = 1,643) were oversampled for a supplemental sample, and 1,280 young persons in the military (as of September 1978) were also included. Respondents have been interviewed annually through personal household interviews averaging about 1½ hours in length. The completion rate for the base year was 89.7% for the cross-sectional sample, 88.7% for the basic supplemental sample, and 71.5% for the military sample (Frankel, McWilliams, and Spencer, 1983). Reinterviewing rates have been consistently very high, with 95% of the original cohort reinterviewed for the sixth time in 1984—6,062 males and 6,009 females aged 19–27.

While the initial focus of the survey was primarily on the labor market experience of young people, a number of lifestyle and health-related questions were added in successive waves. In 1984, a series of drug-related questions was included along with the earlier battery of questions on education, labor force participation, marriage, fertility, and alcohol usage. Respondents were asked separate questions about cigarettes and marijuana. For illicit drugs other than marijuana and nonmedical use of pills and tranquilizers, respondents were shown a card, read a list of drugs, and asked for each whether or not they had ever used it. For each drug used, further series of questions inquired about lifetime frequency of use, recency of use in the last year, frequency of use in the last month, and age at first use. Response categories were designed to ensure comparability with two national drug-related surveys described in further detail below, Monitoring the Future (Johnston, O'Malley, and Bachman, 1986) and the General Household Survey (Miller et al., 1983). Additional questions were asked about lifetime, last-year, and last-month frequency of use for each of three classes of medically prescribed psychotropics (sedatives, stimulants, and minor tranquilizers). In addition, respondents were asked to fill in a time chart indicating the months from 1979 to the present when they had used marijuana. Refusal rates were less than 1% for most drug questions, apparently indicating that respondents were comfortable answering these questions. However, those who have investigated response bias in surveys on socially undesirable or illegal activities suggest that most people want to appear cooperative, and therefore provide an answer regardless of how uneasy the questioning makes them (Bradburn et al., 1978).

As in preceding waves of data collection, respondents were assured complete confidentiality. No names appeared on the interview schedule, only an identification number. In addition, to assure the confidentiality of the drug-related reports, a grant of confidentiality was specifically obtained from the Surgeon General guaranteeing that none of the records could be subpoenaed for any legal proceedings, whether at the local, state, or federal levels.

The fieldwork was carried out by NORC of the University of Chicago. As reflected in the very high completion rates, participation in the study has been excellent. There was no reason to expect less than candid answers. Yet, comparison with data from other surveys suggests that underreporting may have occurred.

COMPARISON STUDIES

In the absence of an independent criterion that would validate the respondents' drug reports, such as biological assays, the quality of the drug self-reports was established through comparison with two other national drug surveys. Monitoring the Future (MF) is an annual nationwide cross-sectional survey of approximately 16,000 high school seniors based on self-administered questionnaires collected in classrooms (Johnston, O'Malley, and Bachman, 1986). Although respondents were asked to give their names and addresses, the questionnaires and address pages linked by ID number were collected separately and sealed in different envelopes. Approximately 30% of each birth cohort is not represented in the sample, namely, nonparticipants among seniors enrolled in high school (18%–20% of each class) and those who have already dropped out of school (approximately 15%–17% of the age group). The General Household Survey (GHS) is a nationwide survey of the general population aged 12 and over, excluding students living in college dormitories and persons with no fixed addresses, carried out every two or three years (Miller et al., 1983). Data are collected through personal household interviews, but the drug questions are answered through a self-administered form that is sealed in a separate envelope. Although a new survey was fielded in 1985, the last survey for which data are published was completed in 1982, when approximately 1,280 young adults aged 18–25 were interviewed (Miller et al., 1983).

Members of the same birth cohorts can be identified in each study and their responses compared to those obtained in the NLSY sample.

Results

EXTENT OF UNDERREPORTING

Lifetime prevalence of the use of various licit and illicit drugs was compared across the three studies.

In order to ensure meaningful comparisons with MF, an age and education restricted group from the NLSY corresponding to the same birth cohort represented by a particular high school graduating class and limited to high school graduates was examined alongside the high school seniors who were interviewed one or more years earlier. Thus, high school seniors from 1983, aged 18 on the average, were compared with 19-year-old high school graduates from the 1984 NLSY as members of the 1964–65 birth cohorts, seniors from 1982 were compared with 20-year-old graduates from the 1984 NLSY as members of the 1963–64 birth cohorts, and so on. Assuming that most high school seniors are 17 or 18 years old, roughly the same birth cohort is examined one, two, three, and four years later in the NLSY. The expectation is that lifetime prevalence in the NLSY will be at least as great and most likely greater than in the other studies. Indeed, the sample is a more complete representation of these birth cohorts and is older, so that the population is exposed to the risk of drug use initiation for additional time. This risk appears to terminate at about age 20 or 21 for marijuana but not until the mid-twenties for cocaine (Kandel and Logan, 1984; Raveis and Kandel, 1987; O'Malley, Bachman, and Johnston, 1984). However, because of the recent decline in the use of illicit drugs other than cocaine, for which prevalence rates are believed to be still increasing although at a much slower rate (Johnston, O'Malley, and Bachman, 1986), it is difficult to predict just how much greater the prevalence rates should be in the NLSY than in MF.

Table 1 indicates that use of the licit drugs, alcohol and cigarettes, is higher among the older respondents in the NLSY than in MF. As regards marijuana, by contrast, lifetime prevalence is somewhat lower among 19-year-olds in the 1984 NLSY than among high school seniors in 1983. The lifetime levels of use are slightly higher in the NLSY for the two older cohorts (21 and 22) but less than anticipated given that initiation of marijuana continues beyond the age of 18, albeit at a substantially reduced rate (Kandel and Logan, 1984). For simplicity, data pertaining only to 19- and 22-year-olds are presented in Table 1.

For illicit drugs other than marijuana there appears to be considerable underreporting of lifetime prevalence of use in the NLSY. Underreporting varies by substance and appears to be lowest for cocaine (44% lower than the proportion of users in the 1983 wave of MF) and highest for the inhalants (over 85% lower).

Substantial differences also appear in comparisons with the 1982 GHS. When interviewed for that survey, respondents were between the ages of 18 and 25, which would make them 20–27 in 1984, belonging for the most part to the same birth cohorts as the NLS youth sample. Lifetime use of all illicit drugs, except marijuana and stimulants, is strikingly *lower* in the NLSY. Approximately half as many young persons report experimentation with hallucinogens and nonprescription tranquilizers, and over a third fewer report involvement with cocaine in the NLSY than in the household survey. There are even lower reported levels of lifetime use of prescription drugs (see Table 1).

Reported current use, for both the last 30 days and the last 12 months, is also low. For example, in 1984, 40% of high school seniors reported using marijuana in the last 12 months and 25% in the last 30 days (Johnston, O'Malley, and Bachman, 1986), compared with 33% and 16% of 19-year-old high school graduates in the NLSY.

If, as it appears, drug prevalence estimates are too low in the NLSY, it is important to determine whether differential underreporting exists according to degree of involvement. Are light users more likely to forget or less inclined to admit experimentation? Or are heavy users, who are more likely to be current users and may therefore feel particu-

Table 1. Comparison of Lifetime Prevalence of Use of Various Substances and Frequency of Use Among Users in the NLSY and Other Studies for Different Survey Years and Birth Cohorts

	MF (1983)	NLSY[a] (1984)	MF (1980)	NLSY[a] (1984)	GHS (1982)	NLSY (1984)
Age at survey	17–18	19	17–18	22	18–25	19–27
Birth cohort	64–65	64	61–62	61–62	56–64	57–64
Drugs ever used						
Alcohol	93%	94%	93%	98%	95%	96%
Cigarettes	71	73	71	79	77	82
Marijuana	57	52	60	62	64	65
Hallucinogens	12	4	13	9	21	10
Cocaine	16	9	16	16	28	18
Heroin	1	1	1	0	1	1
Stimulants	35	16	26	21	18	22
Sedatives	14	4	15	8	19	10

Tranquilizers	13	3	15	7	15	8
Inhalants	14	2	12	1	—	—
Amphetamines Rx	[b]		[b]		4	3
Barbiturates Rx	[b]		[b]		10	3
Minor Tranq. Rx	[b]		[b]		19	9
Total *N*	16,300	794	15,900	1,141	1,283	12,069
% of Users Using[c]	40 + times		40 + times		100 + times	
Marijuana	33	26	41	38	38	28
Total *N*	9,289	414	9,551	702	815	7,765
Cocaine	7	25	8	18	9	13
Total *N*	2,267	72	2,503	182	362	2,150

Notes: MF = Monitoring the Future (Johnston, Bachman, and O'Malley, 1984). NLS = National Longitudinal Survey. Secondary analysis of data. GHS = General Household Survey (Miller et al., 1983).

[a] Restricted to high school graduates.

[b] Not asked.

[c] Different frequency categories were used in MF and GHS.

larly threatened, less willing to report drug involvement? We are assuming that frequency of use among the self-acknowledged users is reasonably accurate (Bradburn et al., 1978).

Comparisons with the two other surveys of lifetime frequency among self-identified drug users from the same birth cohorts are also provided in Table 1.

Although some aggregation was necessary in order to form comparable frequency of use categories, initial differences in scale intervals could undermine comparisons. Both Monitoring the Future and the General Household Survey are more detailed at the lower end of the scale, which may have had the effect of producing a greater number of lighter users relative to the NLSY. Greater detail at the upper end provides a distinction between moderate and heavy users although recall accuracy may be sacrificed. It is undoubtedly more difficult to remember the exact number of frequent than of rare events (O'Malley, Bachman, and Johnston, 1983).

Differences between the NLSY and other surveys vary according to drug class. Reported degree of marijuana involvement is lower in the NLSY, especially in comparison to the GHS. Among users, over one-third more report a lifetime frequency of at least one hundred times in the GHS than in the NLSY. However, given the age pattern of marijuana initiation, 18- to 25-year-old users in the GHS would be more likely to be recent initiators than those aged 19–27 in the NLSY and were expected to have lower lifetime frequency of use. While the distribution for the 1980 MF is virtually analogous to that of 22-year-olds in the NLSY, the distribution for the 1983 MF is somewhat different from that of 19-year-olds. Among 19-year-olds, heavier users are underrepresented in the NLSY. In general then, most marijuana users in the NLSY appear to be willing to admit some involvement, although they are less willing to acknowledge heavy use.

By contrast, for other illicit drugs, e.g., amphetamines, barbiturates, cocaine, and hallucinogens, lifetime frequency among self-reported users is consistently higher in the NLSY. While one-fourth of the 19-year-olds in the NLSY, who indicate some experience with cocaine, claim to have used it at least 40 times, fewer than 10% of the cocaine users among 1983 high school seniors do so. The difference is greater than would be expected from the fact that the NLSY sample is one year older than the high school seniors. In every comparison for each illicit drug other than marijuana, lifetime prevalence among acknowledged users is higher in the NLSY than in the other two surveys. (Data are not given for drugs other than cocaine.) The higher frequency of use coupled with the underreporting of lifetime prevalence suggests that those who may have denied any experience with illicit drugs other than marijuana were less intensely involved than those who admitted use.

CONSISTENCY OF RESPONSES OVER TIME

One advantage of longitudinal surveys is that responses can be examined for consistency over time. In the second wave of the NLS youth survey in 1980, a series of 21 closed-ended questions were asked about participation in delinquent activities during the last year, including two questions about drug consumption. Respondents were instructed to fill in a form which stated:

> For each activity below, please check which best describes the number of times you have done it.
> 1. smoked marijuana or hashish ("pot," "grass," "hash")
> 2. used any drugs or chemicals to get high or for kicks, except marijuana

The respondents were reminded verbally that reporting was to be confined to prior year activities. An envelope was provided for the form, which the interviewer sealed in the respondent's presence.

In the 1984 survey, respondents were questioned not only on current, past year, and lifetime experience with drugs, but also on when they had first used each drug and, specifically, in which months they had used marijuana from January 1979 to the 1984 interview. Thus, it was possible to investigate inconsistencies for reported prevalence and timing of marijuana use. Excessive noncomparability of question wording precludes consistency checking for usage of illicit drugs other than marijuana.

All those who reported last-year use in 1980 could be expected to report some lifetime use in 1984. The analysis of the incidence and characteristics of deniers, those who in 1980 said they used but claimed in 1984 never to have done so, sheds light on the pattern rather than the degree of underreporting. The number of these inconsistent reports provides only a lower bound estimate of the frequency of underreporting because prevalence figures from MF and the GHS would suggest that a certain number of respondents who claim in both surveys not to have experimented with drugs are in fact users. Furthermore, no consistency check can be made between lifetime reported use in the two periods. The retrospective reports themselves may not be completely accurate regarding timing of use.

Based on annual drug use reported in 1980 in conjunction with the retrospective information obtained in 1984 on the timing of marijuana use since 1979, the proportion of denials as well as potential recall errors were calculated. Only a small fraction of those who reported use within the last year in the 1980 survey fail to report any lifetime use in 1984, 8% among men and 12% among women. Correspondingly, 20% of men and 10% of women who reported in 1980 that they had not used marijuana within the last year reported in 1984 that they were using marijuana in 1980.

Table 2. Consistency of Marijuana Use Reporting Between 1980 and 1984

Response Pattern	1980 Survey Reported Use in Last Year	1984 Survey Reported Use in 1979–80	Time of use Reported for 1979–80 Nonuser with Lifetime Involvement	Male	Female
Consistent	No	No	—	27%	36%
	No	No	After 1979–80	6	7
	No	No	Before 1979–80	5	6
	Yes	Yes	—	37	28
Inconsistent	Yes	No	—	4	6
	Yes	No	After 1979–80	6	6
	Yes	No	Before 1979–80	5	7
	No	Yes	—	10	6
Total *N*				5,561	5,460

Respondents in the cohort were classified according to their consistency status (Table 2). While approximately one-fourth of the reports are inconsistent, a much greater proportion of young people misremember periods of marijuana use than claim never to have used the drug. The proportion of those who fail to report use is counterbalanced by the proportion of those who did not report use initially, but do so now. Those who reported using marijuana within the last year in 1980 but claim in 1984 that they never used constitute a small proportion of the total sample of men (4%) and women (6%).

A comparison of responses to questions on lifetime prevalence of alcohol in the 1982 and 1983 waves of the NLSY suggests that underreporting is considerably less frequent for alcohol than for marijuana, although differences between surveys in the recall interval, one year in one case but four in the other, could alone account for these differences in accuracy. Only 1.4% of youth who reported having had a drink by the 1982 interview deny ever drinking in 1983. Questions on problem drinking, a presumably more sensitive behavior, result in much greater inconsistency over time. Of those who admitted in 1982 ever having drinking-related problems in school or work, on the next interview in 1983 only about half reported a lifetime problem for school and slightly more than a third for work (Crowley, 1985).

SUBGROUP DIFFERENCE IN INCONSISTENCY

In line with results from prior investigations, we find that misreporting varies inversely with degree of drug involvement. Experimental marijuana users are much less likely to acknowledge subsequently any involvement than those who have used the drug more frequently. Nearly one-fifth of females and 14% of males who claimed to have used marijuana 1 to 5 times in 1980 report no lifetime use in 1984 compared to 7% and 4%, respectively, of those who reported using at least 50 times. Single, Kandel, and Johnson (1975) argue from similar findings that failure to report drug use is a consequence of faulty memory rather than deliberate misrepresentation. Because the most frequent users constitute less than 1% of the total sample, however, their denial has a negligible effect on epidemiological estimates. Still, a question emerges as to whether reporting nonuse, even among casual users, reflects poor recall or conscious denial. While in some social circles the taking of drugs has become acceptable, it is still an illegal, and, presumably, unforgettable act. It may be that those who are infrequent users do not want to be regarded as drug users and provide socially desirable responses.

To determine whether differential nonreporting is also present in various sociodemographic groups, the percentage of inconsistent marijuana responses was calculated separately for selected respondents' characteristics.

Inconsistent responses vary significantly by race, school dropout status, and region for both sexes, as well as marital status and rural–urban residence for women and age for men[1] (Table 3). For men and women, the most striking differential is for race. Nonreporting of drug use is twice as common among blacks and Hispanics as among whites. Nonreporting is less frequent among urban residents and those who have attended college among men and women and among the maritally disrupted among women. The pattern of nonreporting by region differs for the sexes. Self-reported marijuana users in 1980 residing in the Northeast for men and in the South for women are more likely to claim in 1984 that they never used.

These differentials may be attenuated or disappear entirely once frequency of use is controlled. If response inconsistency is primarily a function of intensity of involvement, the underreporting observed in the NLSY may be relatively benign for analyses of the causes and consequences of drug use. To investigate differential underreporting, while controlling for intensity of use, a logistic regression predicting response consistency was performed among those who reported use in

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[1] Since the NLSY is not a simple random sample, the reported variances may be too small, occasionally leading to the incorrect conclusion of significant differences. Design effects that give the ratio of the variances for the NLSY to the variances for a simple random sample are not available for the 1984 wave. For earlier waves they range from 1.0 (no effect) to 1.8.

Table 3. Characteristics of Inconsistent Respondents: Proportion of Those Reporting Marijuana Use in 1980 Who Claim Never to Have Used in 1984

	Male		Female	
	Percent	*N*	Percent	*N*
Total Sample of 1980 Users	9	2,872	12	2,499
Age				
19–21	11	786	13	752
22–24	8	1,151	11	1,049
25–27	7	935	14	698
Diff. among categories	**		n.s.	
Education				
Dropout—no diploma	12	528	15	343
Dropout—GED or diploma	6	300	7	216
High school graduate	10	1,016	14	998
Some college	6	950	9	874
Diff. among categories	***		***	
Marital status				
Never married	8	1,927	12	1,296
Married	9	794	14	949
Sep./div./wid.	8	150	5	253
Diff. among categories	n.s.		***	
Rural/urban				
Urban	8	2,516	11	2,181
Rural	11	314	19	281
Diff. among categories	n.s.		***	
Region				
Northeast	11	609	10	540
North-central	6	770	13	672
South	9	833	17	766
West	7	626	6	502
Diff. among categories	**		***	
Labor force				
Working	9	2,126	12	1,543
Unemployed	8	422	14	191
Keeping house	—	—	14	506
In school	6	291	11	245
Diff. among categories	n.s.		n.s.	
Race				
Hispanic	13	156	22	123
Black	14	343	22	276
White/other	7	2,373	10	2,110
Diff. among categories	***		***	
1980 reported frequency				
1–5 times	14	1,038	19	1,055
6–49	7	692	7	795
50+	4	1,143	7	649
Diff. among categories	***		***	

NOTES: *F*-test used to assess significance. N.s. = not significant.
** $p \leq .01$. *** $p \leq .001$.

1980 using the same set of variables that were included in the descriptive analysis shown in Table 3 (data not presented).

Frequency of use remains the best predictor in the multivariate analysis. While the odds of claiming no lifetime involvement are greatly increased if frequency of use in 1980 was low, a number of other significant variables indicate that differential misreporting according to socioeconomic characteristics is nevertheless present. Although results differ slightly for the two sexes, both among men and women, blacks and Hispanics are less likely than whites to report use, as are high school dropouts who have not returned to school compared with respondents who have attended college.

FIELD CONDITION EFFECTS ON REPORTING

In addition to individual characteristics, we investigated the potential effects of the interviewing situation itself on respondents' responses. In particular, we examined those field conditions that may increase the awareness of normative standards for respondents and make it more difficult for them to report behaviors that contravene these standards. Two such factors were examined: presence of a third party during the interview, and whether or not the respondent knew the interviewer.

Presence of others during the interview. Drug questions were asked and answered verbally in the NLSY, which could undermine reporting, especially if a parent was within hearing range. While the presence of others during the interview might be expected to influence respondents' answers (Turner and Martin, 1984), reporting of socially desired behaviors, such as voting, and threatening behaviors, such as gambling, drinking, and sexual intercourse, appear to be unaffected by third-party presence (Silver, Abramson, and Anderson, 1986; Bradburn, Sudman, and Associates, 1979). Results from studies evaluating specifically the effect of privacy on self-reported illicit drug use are contradictory. NORC found in 1975 in a national sample of adults 18 years and older that use of marijuana and nonprescription stimulants and depressants were somewhat underreported when spouses were present; marijuana and depressant use were also underreported when a child was present. By contrast, if a friend was in the room, illicit drug use was overreported. While too few cases of parental presence were observed to warrant presentation of the data, it was for these cases that the strongest response effects occurred (Bradburn, Sudman, and Associates, 1979). Reporting was affected by presence of parents in the youth sample of the 1979 and 1982 waves of the General Household Survey on Drug Abuse (Gfroerer, 1985), but not in samples of high school–aged students (Zanes and Matsoukas, 1979; Rootman and Smart, 1985).

We find that the presence of a parent at any time during the NLSY interview produces no significant reduction in levels of reported illicit drug use. Among the one-third of the sample still living with parents, lifetime involvement with marijuana is 57% for those with parents present and 61% for those alone with the interviewer (compared with 67% for those who live on their own). Not only is the difference between the first two groups unexpectedly small, too few respondents had parents present during part or all of the interview (3.0%) to account for the underreporting observed in the total sample. The possibility remains that parents not actually present may be close by, and therefore that mere residence in the parental household lowers reporting, a conclusion supported by results from a drug survey comparing self-reports at school and in the home (Rootman and Smart, 1985). Alternatively, the relationship between residence and reported drug involvement may reflect the fact that residents in parental homes may be more likely to conform and less inclined to experiment with drugs (O'Malley, Bachman, and Johnston, 1984).

Interviewer familiarity. The longitudinal nature of the NLSY survey could itself be responsible for the underreporting of drug use. A concerted attempt is made by NORC to retain the same interviewers from round to round of the study. In 1984, 78% of the 368 interviewers had participated in earlier waves (Campbell, 1984). The respondents could have developed a good rapport with their questioners so that, paradoxically, verbal reporting of delinquent and socially undesirable or sensitive acts may have proved difficult. 1984 was the first year respondents were asked to report on illegal activities aloud, although they had been asked about abortions in 1983 and 1982; in 1980, questions on delinquency were answered using a self-administered form.

Interviewers' prior expectations about the difficulty of asking and obtaining accurate responses to questions on socially undesirable or embarassing behaviors have been shown to have only a moderate influence on nonresponse rates and prevalence levels (Sudman et al., 1977). To the best of our knowledge, interviewer familiarity has not previously been directly investigated since Hyman's (1954) groundbreaking work on the effects of interviewers' social involvement on response patterns. However, researchers have concluded that "the more personal the data gathering mode" and the more personable the interviewer, "the greater the likelihood of lower data quality" and "item nonresponse" (Frey, 1983:46–47). Just as mail surveys are less personal than face-to-face surveys, face-to-face surveys with an unknown interviewer are less personal than those with a known one.

In order to test the hypothesis that rates of drug use reported in a personal interview would be depressed by familiarity with the interviewer, we classified respondents according to the number of times

Table 4. Reported Lifetime Prevalence of Marijuana and Cocaine by Number of Times Responded to the Same Interviewer as in 1984

Number of Previous Contacts with Same Interviewer or with 1984 Interviewer	Ever Used Marijuana		Ever Used Cocaine		Total *N*	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Never same interviewer	71%	68%	30%	19%	870	709
Never '84 interviewer	72	58	23	14	1,543	1,741
'84 interviewer once before (2 contacts altogether)	69	61	22	14	1,104	1,008
'84 interviewer twice before (3 contacts altogether)	68	60	20	14	883	873
'84 interviewer three times before (4 contacts altogether)	65	56	16	11	1,336	1,372
Differences among categories	**	***	***	***		

NOTE: *F*-test used to assess significance.
** $p \leq .01$. *** $p \leq .001$.

they had been contacted by the same interviewer. A maximum of three prior contacts could be measured since interviewer codes were not available for the first two waves of the study. Furthermore, respondents who had never previously interacted with the 1984 interviewer were separated into those who had never had the same interviewer at least twice before and those who did, although not the person they faced in 1984. The results strongly support the hypothesis. If for the prior three waves respondents had never been interviewed by the same person, reported involvement in drugs is much higher than for any other group. Reports by those who had always been interviewed by the same interviewer are consistently the lowest (Table 4).

The more socially unacceptable the substance, the stronger the association. For example, among men reported cocaine use is 1.8 times higher but marijuana use 1.1 times higher for those who never had the same interviewer compared with those who always did. The reporting behavior of the middle three groups, and especially of the second group, is noteworthy. Respondents who had never met the 1984 interviewer previously but had been interviewed by the same person two or three times in the past (group 2) are as unlikely to report the use of marijuana or cocaine as those respondents who had faced the 1984 interviewer at least once in the past (group 3). This finding suggests that when faced with an interviewer, respondents respond not only in terms of their *past* familiarity with the person but also in terms of their subjective expectations regarding the probability of meeting this person in the *future*. The study had no measures of subjective expectations. However, we infer that those who face a stranger are less likely to report disapproved behaviors if they expect to meet that person again than if they do not expect a future encounter. This expectation appears to be based on prior personal experience in the interview situation. Support for this interpretation is strengthened by the finding that, among those who faced a stranger in 1984 but had met the same interviewer previously (group 2), the observed expectancy effect increases as a function of the number of prior contacts and is stronger for those who had seen that person three times rather than twice before. Among women, for instance, 54% versus 62% reported any lifetime marijuana use in the former compared to the latter group.

While lifetime cocaine use is a function of prior familiarity with the interviewer, intensity of use is not (data not shown), supporting the assumption that frequency of use among self-acknowledged users is accurate. Once respondents decide to report on their drug experiences at all, they do so to the best of their ability.

We explored further whether the observed interviewer familiarity effect in the reporting of deviant or sensitive behaviors could be due to the fact that the same factors related to drug use distinguish respondents who have been interviewed by the same person over time from those who have not. If those who have used illegal drugs are more deviant and more geographically mobile and therefore less likely to be assigned the same interviewer, our conclusion must be qualified. In order to test this additional hypothesis, we carried out two additional multivariate analyses.

First, we investigated the correlates of interviewer familiarity. Of the factors we examined, education (i.e., non–college educated), rural residence, region, religion, and living with parents were significant for both sexes, and being married, white, and nondelinquent were significant for men (data not shown). Region is clearly the variable most strongly associated with interviewer familiarity: residents in the north-central region are most likely to meet the same interviewer all four years and least likely to meet a different interviewer for each year. This region is where NORC, the organization conducting the fieldwork, is located. It is not solely individual characteristics, such as delinquency, that predict whether a respondent is likely to face the same interviewer but also, more importantly, proximity to the survey organization.

Furthermore, when the same variables that were used to predict interviewer familiarity are included in a logistic regression predicting cocaine use, the interviewer effect, although not as strong a determinant as delinquency, remains significant for the extreme category, i.e., those who never saw the same interviewer during the four waves of data collection (Table 5).

Interviewer characteristics. In contrast to the paucity of information on interviewer-familiarity effects, there is an extensive literature on interviewer-attributed response effects in surveys (see, for example, Sudman and Bradburn, 1974; Bradburn, 1983; Hyman et al., 1954; Bradburn, Sudman, and Associates, 1979; Turner and Martin, 1984). While the interviewer's social characteristics, personality, attitudes, and behaviors have all been mentioned as factors which potentially undermine results, it has been argued that response effects are more a function of questionnaire administration and question form, order, and length than of interviewer variables (Bradburn, 1983). The consensus is that interviewer–respondent interactions emerge as a function of demographic traits only if the question deals in some way with that particular trait. Racial, ethnic, social class, age, and sex effects occur if the question pertains to race, ethnicity, social class, age, or sex but not otherwise (Schuman and Converse, 1971; Sudman and Bradburn, 1974; Campbell, 1981; Colombotos, Elinson, and Loewenstein, 1968; Weeks and Moore, 1981). The NLSY data provide further supporting evidence for this conclusion. We found no strong interviewer–respondent interactions for sex or race with regard to reporting of drug use (data not shown). However, there was a slight trend for higher proportions of reported use of illicit drugs by all women and by Hispanic males if the interviewer was ethnically dissimilar.

Discussion and Conclusion

The lower reporting of illicit drug use in the NLSY compared to other surveys was unexpected. While lifetime marijuana use reported in the NLSY is close to that of other national surveys, reporting for other illicit drugs is considerably lower, varying somewhat by substance and by lifetime degree of involvement. Those who fail to report use of a particular drug appear to be less intensely involved in using it. Thus, two processes appear to be going on concurrently. Lower involvement in a particular behavior as well as perceived threat may lead to underreporting of certain socially disapproved behaviors. As hypothesized by Bradburn, Sudman, and Associates (1979:83), "perceived threat thus acts as a gatekeeper to prevent further questions." However, once a respondent decides to acknowledge participation, threat does not appear to affect reported frequency of participation in the behavior. This certainly appears to be the case for the report of illicit drugs other than marijuana.

Table 5. Effects of Various Respondent Characteristics on the Log Odds of Ever Using Cocaine by 1984[a] (Logistic Regression)

Variable	Male (N = 4,862) B	Female (N = 5,117) B
Age (vs. 25–27)		
19–21	−.656***	−.517***
22–24	−.212*	−.094
Education (vs. 13+ years)		
Dropout, no diploma	.132	.136
Dropout, GED or diploma	.664***	.864***
High school graduate	−.115	.091
Marital status (vs. married)		
Never married	.570***	.777***
Sep./div./wid.	.417*	.525**
Residence (vs. urban)		
Rural	−.461***	−.380*
Region (vs. Northeast)		
North-central	−.680***	−.874***
South	−.369***	−.530***
West	.201	.186
Labor force status (vs. in school)		
Working	.241	.285
Unemployed	.259	.277
Keeping house	—	−.019
Race (vs. white/other)		
Black or Hispanic	−.649***	−.823***
Religion (vs. no religion)		
Catholic	−.271*	−.243
Baptist	−.602***	−.754***
Other protestant	−.213**	−.227
Jewish	.607	.601
Other	−.459	−.300
Living arrangement (vs. other)		
With parents	−.400***	−.367**
1980 delinquent acts (vs. none)		
1–2	.413***	.819***
3+	1.125***	1.362***
Interviewer familiarity (vs. '84 3 times)		
Never same interviewer	.266*	.450**
Never '84 interviewer	.104	.258
'84 interviewer once before	.046	.067
'84 interviewer twice before	.037	.226
Constant	−1.591	−2.335

[a] Logit coefficients.

* $p \leq .05$. ** $p \leq .01$. *** $p \leq .001$.

Reinterviewing by the same interviewer in this longitudinal survey, the very feature of the research design which NORC emphasized as contributing to the high retention rate from 1979 to 1984 (Campbell, 1984; Jones, Burich, and Campbell, 1986), may have contributed to the underreporting of drug use. The rapport established between respondents and interviewer may deter the reporting of illegal and deviant activities. This may be especially the case when interviewers are older than respondents and thus represent the adult population that sets and defines norms in the society at large. Perhaps the interviewer becomes somewhat of a parental figure. The majority of interviewers in the NLSY survey are women (92.8%), and their mean age is 48.6. Field conditions that increase the subjective awareness of social norms may increase reluctance to admitting to behaviors that contravene these norms.

Furthermore, after years of responding to questions focusing primarily on labor force participation and education, respondents may also be suspicious of an extensive battery of drug questions. Whether "piggybacking" of illegal or sensitive questions in longitudinal surveys arouses more anxiety than similar questions in a standard cross-sectional survey needs to be explored more thoroughly.

Method of interview administration may be another contributing factor to underreporting. Although it is generally believed that more complete reporting of threatening behaviors occurs with self-administered rather than interviewer-read questions, this has not been definitely established (Sudman and Bradburn, 1974; Bradburn, 1983; Bradburn, Sudman, and Associates, 1979). A longitudinal survey that we conducted through face-to-face personal interviews revealed considerably higher levels of involvement with illicit drugs than did the NLSY (Kandel and Logan, 1984), levels that were similar to those reported by the GHS. Since its inception in 1972, the GHS has consistently used self-reported forms for the illicit drug questions. Alcohol prevalence rates increased appreciably in 1979, the first year that responses were marked on a private answer sheet form rather than spoken to the interviewer, compared to rates reported in the prior survey in 1977. However, in the following survey in 1982, rates went down, although not to levels as low as in 1977. Thus, the increase observed in 1979 may in part reflect real trends rather than differences in interview administration (Miller et al., 1983).

Groups for whom underreporting in the NLSY is most severe are often those for whom rates of use reported in the literature are comparatively low—women and blacks. The case of ethnicity is an especially important one. Every study that has reported drug use rates by ethnicity in epidemiological or school studies shows lower rates for blacks than for whites for almost all drug classes, including alcohol, marijuana, cocaine, and nonmedical use of psychotropics, among adolescents as well as young adults (Bachman, Johnston, and O'Malley, 1981; Johnson, 1973; Miller et al., 1983; Maddahian, Newcomb, and Bentler, 1986; Bray et al., 1986; Robins, 1985; Zabin et al., in press), although not necessarily for middle aged respondents (Robins, 1985). These lower rates in general population samples contrast with the overrepresentation of blacks among drug users who come in contact with various institutions, those in drug treatment programs (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 1986) and general hospital admissions for a drug-related problem (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 1981), and of blacks and Hispanics among arrestees with a urine test positive for drugs (Eric Wish, personal communication, 1986). In our sample, minority and female underreporting cannot be attributed to greater familiarity with the interviewer, since multivariate analysis indicates that blacks and Hispanics are equally likely (females) or even more likely (males) to have had different interviewers than are whites, and women are more likely to have had different interviewers than men, although the difference is not statistically significant.

The issue of underreporting of drug use by blacks has not been treated extensively in the literature, although the authors of *Monitoring the Future* note a higher rate of missing data on questions dealing with the use of illicit drugs among black males than other students (Johnston, Bachman, and O'Malley, 1984). There may be consistently greater underreporting of deviant activities by black and Hispanic than by white respondents, and lower quality of responses to surveys more generally. In a validity study of self-reported criminal behaviors, Hindelang, Hirschi, and Weis (1981) concluded that blacks were more likely than whites to underreport their criminal offenses, a finding subsequently confirmed by Huizinga and Elliott (1984). From comparisons of the NLSY with data from the National Center for Health Statistics, Mott (1983) concluded that blacks were more likely than whites to underreport abortions. A consistent pattern seems to be emerging where members of minority groups are more inclined to provide socially desirable responses than majority members. One explanation may be that minority groups may feel more threatened or made more uneasy by such self-reports. Findings from Monitoring the Future tend to support this interpretation. In 1983, black non–drug users were more than twice as likely as whites to indicate that they would not have reported drug use had they been involved, 14% versus 6% for marijuana, and 19% versus 8% for heroin (Johnston, Bachman, and O'Malley, 1984: Q E13–15). The investigators attribute these racial differences to less "trust in the research process" (Johnston, Bachman, and O'Malley, 1984:10). Not only are blacks and Hispanics more reluctant to admit to deviant behaviors, they also appear to be less likely to provide reliable responses to less sensitive questions. A comparison of students' self-reports of family background, school performance, and coursework with parental responses and high school transcripts in the longitudinal survey *High School and Beyond* indicates that data from blacks and Hispanics are more discrepant than those from whites (Fetters, Stowe, and Owings, 1984).

Since not all studies that report racial differences control for other socioeconomic variables, educational attainment rather than minority group status may determine reaction to and ability to deal with surveys. That racial differences in underreporting remain significant in our multivariate analysis after controlling for schooling suggests that minority group status is a crucial factor in the quality of survey data, over and beyond any other factor related to educational achievement and socioeconomic status.

The NLSY data tapes are public use tapes that will be used by many other investigators. The finding of differential reporting for questions on the use of illicit drugs has implications for all researchers investigating deviant or illegal activities, however, not just those analyzing data from the NLSY. It would be important to determine the extent to which minority underreporting and misreporting is a pervasive problem that is affecting most attitudinal and behavioral indicators obtained through social surveys. The results from this study have documented, however, that field conditions—in particular, interviewer familiarity—as well as individual characteristics contribute to the quality of reporting of deviant behaviors. We speculate that interviewer familiarity increases salience of normative standards and that participants respond not only in terms of their past familiarity but also in terms of their subjective expectations regarding the probability of a future encounter with the interviewer.

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THE POLLS—A Report

IDEOLOGICAL IDENTIFICATION: TRENDS AND INTERPRETATIONS OF THE LIBERAL–CONSERVATIVE BALANCE

JOHN P. ROBINSON AND
JOHN A. FLEISHMAN

The ideological dimension of liberalism–conservatism is commonly used to describe political actors and to interpret political events. Despite the centrality and importance of this dimension among political elites, data concerning the public's self-identification as liberal or conservative have been regularly gathered only recently, starting in 1972 for the biennial election surveys of the Center for Political Studies (CPS), and in 1974 for the annual General Social Surveys (GSS). Now, however, questions about whether people consider themselves liberal or conservative are asked routinely.

Data on ideological self-identification are relevant to the debate concerning whether the electorate has become more conservative in the past two decades. Political observers have inferred such shifts from election returns and from the high visibility of such interest groups as the right-to-life lobby, the Moral Majority, and tax-reform organizations.

In order to track trends in ideological self-identification, we have assembled data on items that have been asked more than once by the same survey organization. We have confined our review to those items that directly ask respondents whether they consider themselves as liberal or conservative, excluding large numbers of related questions dealing with the ideological perceptions of political candidates and with definitions or understandings of ideological terms. We have also confined our search to national-level data from the United States.

JOHN P. ROBINSON is a Professor of Sociology and Director of the Survey Research Center of the University of Maryland, College Park. JOHN A. FLEISHMAN is Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. The authors wish to thank Marilyn Potter and staff of the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research for compiling the data tables and the Roper Organization for granting special permission to publish this data prior to public release.

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Items

Substantial "house effects" can be found in how ideology questions are framed and in how the public characterizes itself ideologically. Differences in question framing include whether or not a filter is used to exclude respondents who have no clear conviction, whether or not a middle position is offered, and whether seven or eight response categories are provided to respondents rather than two or three. To compare results across different questions, we have used as a summary measure the ratio of conservatives to liberals.

Although this conservative/liberal ratio varies depending on time period and question type, it generally fluctuates between 1.5 and 2.0. The major exception involves data from Yankelovich surveys, which obtain high ratios (from 2.2 to 4.5). Other organizations (such as *New York Times*/CBS and Harris) which have used similar questions have obtained lower ratios. Since *Times*/CBS and Harris polls explicitly ask about the respondent's political philosophy, while the Yankelovich questions make no mention of politics, many respondents in the latter surveys may answer in terms of their personal, rather than political, conservatism (e.g., preference for established habits, reluctance to take risks). The nature of the sample (registered voters only) or the set of response options (including a "radical" option) may also contribute to the Yankelovich results.

Varying the numbers of response categories (2, 3, 5, or 7) does not systematically alter the conservative/liberal ratio. When a "middle of the road" option is provided, however, 30% to 40% of the respondents choose this response. Many of those who choose a middle position may have only a vague notion of political ideology and may select this option rather than provide a "don't know" response. When an explicit filter ("or haven't you thought much about this") is provided, as in the CPS surveys, 25% to 35% acknowledge that they have thought little about their ideological identification; the proportion giving a middle-of-the-road response declines, compared to other surveys, but it is still substantial.[1]

Some interesting methodological comparisons have been made possible by joint use of the same basic seven-point scales in the CPS and GSS surveys. The CPS survey question has a filter, while the GSS question has no filter. The CPS question elicits a slightly higher conservative/liberal ratio; it also correlates significantly more strongly with party identification (Robinson and Fleishman, 1984). In 1982 the CPS and the GSS both included ten identically worded items concerning preferences for national spending priorities. With one exception (spending for health), the filtered and unfiltered questions did not differ significantly in their relationship to these items—although the filtered question did produce higher correlations.

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[1] Use of a CPS-type filter is recommended. Without a filter, many respondents without an ideological identification may choose the "middle-of-the-road" or "moderate" response options. Moreover, even with a filter, many moderates may have an ideological preference. Thus, in the 1984 CPS survey, respondents were first asked whether they considered themselves liberal, conservative, or moderate; moderates were asked if they leaned toward an ideological position. This procedure resulted in only 3% who steadfastly professed a moderate identification.

Trends

Has the electorate shifted over time toward a more conservative political ideology? For both CPS and GSS data, the distributions of ideological self-identification were compared across time by cross-tabulating ideology and year. Although chi-square for both data sources was statistically significant, the magnitudes of the relationships were minuscule in correlational terms (Tau-*b* = .03 for CPS and .04 for GSS). Controls for age, education, interest in politics, and party identification did not alter the finding of no major change during the 1970s (Fleishman, 1986). Change in the distribution of ideology has been especially negligible in the 1980s.

The conservative/liberal ratio rises in the GSS data from .96 in 1974 to 1.46 in 1986. CPS data show a smaller rise, from 1.42 in 1972 to 1.60 in 1984. The Roper data show more variability, but the ratios hover around 1.7 in the 1970s and tend to fluctuate over 2.0 in the 1980s. The same 2.0 ratio is found in other polls taken in the 1980s by other organizations. These trends correspond to increases in the proportion of conservatives of approximately 3%–5% and to smaller decreases in the proportions of liberals. The trend toward more conservatives, which is stronger among those with more interest in politics (Fleishman, 1986), is certainly nowhere near as profound as political commentators have suggested.

Trends toward more conservatism apparently occurred during the late 1960s. Data gathered prior to 1972 show much lower proportions of conservative identification. The proportions of conservatives and liberals are about equal in the Gallup items asked between 1938 and 1965. (The GSS data also show ratios close to 1.0 for the years 1974–1977.) However, in these 1938–1970 surveys the proportion of "don't know" and of "moderate" responses is much lower than for more recent data; this is particularly true for the 1944 NORC survey. One would expect that, given the lower levels of education among the public two generations ago, the proportion answering "don't know" would be *higher* than the proportion choosing the middle category or the filter option in more recent surveys.

Interpretations of Ideological Identification

In Converse's (1964) classic article, less than 5% of the American voting public mentioned purely ideological factors as reasons for their vote. Converse concluded that less than 20% of the electorate could be characterized as having "an understanding of the [liberal–conservative] distinction that captures much of its breadth" (p. 223). However, subsequent studies using open-ended questions have found up to two-thirds of the public able to demonstrate some correct interpretation, especially in terms of conservatives opposing and liberals favoring social-political change (Robinson and Fleishman, 1984).

In examining politically relevant closed-ended questions in the GSS, Robinson (1984) found that they correlated significantly with ideological identification, although only in the .10 to .25 range.[2] However, the strongest correlates of ideological identification were moral issues, especially those concerned with sex relations outside of marriage. These correlations suggest that the public's interpretation of this scale may be in terms of a "libertine–conservative" dimension.

The modest magnitude of these relationships led Levitin and Miller (1979) to conclude that "ideological position is not simply a statement of many issue positions" (p. 769). Conover and Feldman (1981) also argue that "the meaning of ideological labels is largely based on symbols rather than issues" (p. 641). It seems likely that some respondents answer in terms of their attitudes toward government intervention in the economy, while others may answer in terms of attitudes toward social or moral issues (e.g., racial equality, abortion).

While party identification remains the major predictor of vote in American presidential elections, self-identified liberals and conservatives differ more meaningfully and significantly on political issues than do self-identified Democrats and Republicans. Moreover, and perhaps most important, ideology is also significantly related to vote for presi-

[2] Among the strongest correlates were attitudes toward racial equality, the Equal Rights Amendment, rights of free speech for communists and atheists, and communism as a form of government. At the other end of the spectrum, both liberals and conservatives were in essential agreement that the United States should stay out of world affairs, that the federal income tax is too high, and that the courts do not deal harshly enough with criminals.

dent, even when party identification is controlled (Holm and Robinson, 1978; Miller and Shanks, 1981).[3]

Conclusions

Ideological identification is an important political orientation, reflecting the ambivalent and conflicting strands in the political thinking of the American electorate. While the public continues to identify more with the liberal (Democratic) party, they personally identify themselves as politically conservative by up to two-to-one margins.

Ideology is significantly related to party identification (Levitin and Miller, 1979; Fleishman, 1986). Like party identification, it shows moderate stability over time at the individual level. At the aggregate level, this stability is manifest in the lack of change over the past decade. Despite several years of issue framing and rhetoric from a conservative administration during the 1980s, the distribution of ideological identification has shifted hardly at all.

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[3] Shanks (personal communication) has also found marked, robust, and increasing correlations between liberal–conservative thermometer differences and vote in congressional elections.

The data reported below were assembled with the help of the Roper Center. CPS data are archived by ICPSR, and GSS data are available through NORC. All numbers in the tables are percentages, and the minimum sample size for each data set is reported in each table.

TWO RESPONSE CATEGORIES

Gallup (AIPO) (*N* = 1427+): In politics do you regard yourself as a liberal or conservative?

	Conservative	*In Between, Neither*	*Liberal*	*DK/NA*	*C/L Ratio*
1/38	40	7	43	17	.9
11/44(NORC)	42	4	54	NA	.8
1/47[a]	40	NA	35	25	1.1
3/48[a]	41	NA	31	27	1.3
3/50[a]	28	15	32	25	.9
2/54[b]	36	NA	35	29	1.0
12/54[b]	32	NA	31	37	1.0
5/55[b]	32	NA	35	33	1.0
1/57[b]	27	17	28	28	1.0
6/65(NORC)	34	16	34	16	1.0
12/65	35	16	32	18	1.1
3/70[c]	46	NA	28	26	1.6

[a] Do you consider yourself to be a conservative or a liberal in your political views?

[b] Taking everything into account, would you say that you, yourself, are more of a liberal or a conservative in politics?

[c] Suppose you had to classify yourself as either a liberal or a conservative. Which would you say you are?

Associated Press/Media General (*N* = 1243+): Do you consider yourself more conservative or liberal?

	Conservative	*Neither*	*Liberal*	*DK/NA*	*C/L Ratio*
6/84	56	8	30	6	1.9
8/84	58	11	26	5	2.2
11/84	54	12	29	5	1.9
2/86	57	9	28	6	2.0
4/86	54	13	28	5	1.9
6/86	56	12	27	5	2.1

THREE RESPONSE CATEGORIES

New York Times/CBS News (*N*= 1210+): How would you describe yourself on most political matters? Generally do you think of yourself as a liberal, moderate or conservative?

	Conservative	*Moderate*	*Liberal*	*DK/NA*	*C/L Ratio*
11/76	32	36	23	8	1.4
9/78	27	44	22	5	1.2
1/80	33	41	19	8	1.7
2/80	31	44	19	7	1.6
3/80	33	42	19	7	1.7
4/80	33	42	18	6	1.8
5/80	31	36	21	12	1.5
6/80	25	45	22	8	1.1
8/80	28	49	17	6	1.6
9/80 (3)	32	43	18	8	1.8
10/80	32	43	20	4	1.6
11/80	30	42	20	8	1.5
1/81	37	40	16	7	2.3
4/81	37	39	18	6	2.1
6/81 (2)	32	38	22	8	1.5
9/81	29	43	20	8	1.5
1/82	31	41	19	9	1.6
3/82	32	41	19	7	1.7
5/82	32	43	18	7	1.8
6/82	32	42	17	9	1.9
7/82	32	41	18	10	1.8
9/82	34	40	20	6	1.7
11/82	29	52	17	31	1.7
1/83	35	39	19	7	1.8
4/83	32	40	21	7	1.5
9/83	31	42	20	7	1.6
10/83 (2)	34	40	18	8	1.5
11/83 (2)	31	40	19	10	1.6
12/83	31	42	19	9	1.6
1/84	29	43	20	8	1.5
2/84	30	46	19	5	1.6
3/84 (2)	32	42	18	8	1.8
4/84	31	44	18	7	1.7
6/84	30	42	22	6	1.4
7/84	32	44	17	7	1.9
8/84	32	44	17	7	1.9
9/84	32	44	17	7	1.9
10/84 (4)	29	43	19	9	1.5
11/84 (3)	32	39	21	10	1.9
1/85 (2)	31	43	20	6	1.6
2/85	33	42	19	6	1.7
5/85	30	42	19	8	1.6
9/85	33	38	23	6	1.4
11/85	32	44	19	5	1.9
12/85	27	47	18	8	1.5
1/86	36	38	21	5	1.7
4/86	35	40	18	7	1.9
6/86	33	44	19	5	1.7
8/86	34	40	20	6	1.7

NOTE: Numbers in parentheses indicate multiple surveys in a given month.

Harris (*N* = 1250+): How would you describe your own personal political philosophy—Conservative, Middle-of-the-Road, or Liberal?

	Conservative	*Middle-of-the-Road*	*Liberal*	*Other/ DK*	*C/L Ratio*
4/83	36	40	18	6	2.0
9/84	36	40	18	6	2.0
9/85	37	42	21	—	1.8
1/86	40	38	18	4	2.2

FOUR RESPONSE CATEGORIES

Yankelovich, Skelly, and White (*N* = 1000+): Do you think of yourself as conservative, moderate, liberal or radical?

	Conservative	*Moderate*	*Liberal*	*Radical*	*Not Sure/ Other*	*C/L Ratio*
3/83[a]	48	38	13	1	NA	3.4
6/83[a]	47	38	13	1	NA	3.4
9/83[a]	47	38	13	1	NA	3.4
12/83[a]	45	38	14	2	NA	3.2
1/84[a]	45	38	14	2	NA	3.2
8/84[a]	46	39	13	3	NA	3.5
9/84[a]	43	40	13	2	2	3.3
10/84[a]	44	37	12	2	5	3.7
12/84[a]	45	41	10	2	2	4.5
4/85[a]	48	35	12	1	4	4.0
7/85[a]	42	37	15	2	4	2.8
5/86	36	42	15	NA	8	2.4
7/86	38	37	17	NA	7	2.2

[a] Registered voters only.

FIVE RESPONSE CATEGORIES

Roper (*N* = 1489, 1263, and 1977+ after 1973): Now thinking politically and socially, how would you describe your own general outlook—as being very conservative, moderately conservative, middle of the road, moderately liberal or very liberal?

	Very Conservative	*Moderately Conservative*	*Middle of the Road*	*Moderately Liberal*	*Very Liberal*	*Don't Know*	*C/L Ratio*
10/71	8	38	30	21	5	7	1.7
9/73	7	34	28	20	5	6	1.6
1/74	10	32	29	17	5	7	1.9
6/74	7	28	32	21	7	5	1.3
7/74	6	28	37	23	5	7	1.6
8/74	8	31	28	20	7	6	1.4
9/74	8	31	33	18	5	5	1.7
11/74	9	31	29	20	6	5	1.5
12/74	10	31	29	18	6	6	1.7
1/75	11	30	29	20	5	6	1.6
2/75	10	34	28	17	5	7	2.0
4/75	10	32	28	19	7	5	1.6

	Very Conservative	*Moderately Conservative*	*Middle of the Road*	*Moderately Liberal*	*Very Liberal*	*Don't Know*	*C/L Ratio*
5/75	9	35	29	16	5	7	2.1
6/75	9	30	28	20	7	6	1.4
7/75	8	30	29	20	5	7	1.5
8/75	10	33	29	28	5	5	1.9
9/75	11	31	31	18	5	4	1.8
10/75	10	33	27	19	5	6	1.4
12/75	9	29	29	21	7	6	1.4
1/76	7	34	32	17	5	5	1.9
2/76	9	28	30	18	6	9	1.5
3/76	8	28	32	19	5	7	1.5
4/76	10	30	31	18	6	5	1.7
6/76	9	33	29	18	6	5	1.6
7/76	10	31	29	19	6	5	1.8
8/76	10	31	29	17	6	6	1.6
10/76	11	31	29	17	6	7	1.8
11/76	9	31	31	19	6	5	1.6
12/76	10	32	30	18	5	4	1.8
1/77	8	32	30	20	5	5	1.6
2/77	8	31	32	17	5	5	1.8
3/77	9	33	32	17	4	4	2.0
4/77	10	34	30	18	4	5	2.0
6/77	10	31	32	18	4	6	1.9
7/77	9	31	30	19	5	6	1.7
8/77	10	32	32	16	5	5	2.0
9/77	10	33	29	19	5	4	1.8
11/77	11	31	29	17	5	6	1.9
12/77	9	35	30	16	5	4	2.1
1/78	10	33	30	19	5	4	1.8
2/78	11	29	31	18	6	5	1.7
3/78	9	32	30	19	5	5	1.7
4/78	12	31	30	18	6	4	1.9
6/78	10	31	31	18	6	6	1.7
9/78	9	31	35	16	5	3	2.0
10/78	9	31	31	19	5	5	1.7
12/78	10	31	29	22	6	2	1.5
1/79	10	33	32	17	5	3	1.7
2/79	10	31	32	18	5	5	1.8
3/79	11	34	29	17	5	4	2.0
4/79	10	35	31	16	4	4	2.3
6/79	12	33	29	18	4	4	2.0
6/79	10	35	30	16	5	4	2.1
8/79	11	34	31	16	3	4	2.1
8/79	11	34	31	16	3	4	2.4
9/79	12	35	30	15	4	4	2.2
10/79	10	29	32	17	6	5	1.7
12/79	9	34	33	16	4	3	2.2
1/80	10	32	33	17	5	4	1.9
2/80	9	31	33	16	4	6	1.7
3/80	11	32	32	16	5	4	2.0
4/80	9	30	37	16	4	5	2.0
6/80	12	35	28	17	4	5	2.2
7/80	8	31	35	17	5	5	1.8
8/80	9	32	35	17	4	4	2.0
9/80	10	34	34	13	4	4	2.6
11/80	11	36	29	15	5	4	2.4
11/80	10	33	30	16	5	6	2.0
12/80	11	36	32	13	4	5	2.7

	Very Conservative	*Moderately Conservative*	*Middle of the Road*	*Moderately Liberal*	*Very Liberal*	*Don't Know*	*C/L Ratio*
1/81	12	35	39	15	4	5	2.5
2/81	9	35	31	16	4	5	2.2
3/81	11	35	31	14	4	5	2.5
4/81	11	36	30	15	4	4	2.4
5/81	10	36	31	15	4	5	2.4
7/81	10	36	32	14	4	5	2.6
8/81	10	33	33	16	4	5	2.2
8/81	10	33	33	16	4	5	2.2
9/81	10	33	33	16	4	5	2.4
10/81	10	35	31	15	4	5	2.4
12/81	11	33	32	15	5	5	2.2
1/82	10	34	33	17	4	6	2.1
2/82	9	31	35	14	5	6	2.1
3/82	11	32	31	18	4	4	2.0
4/82	9	34	31	14	5	7	2.3
6/82	10	34	34	15	4	4	2.3
7/82	8	34	32	17	5	5	1.9
8/82	11	32	31	17	5	5	2.0
9/82	10	34	33	15	4	4	2.3
10/82	10	36	31	16	3	4	2.4
12/82	10	33	33	16	4	4	2.2
1/83	10	33	32	18	4	4	2.0
2/83	10	34	33	15	4	4	2.3
3/83	11	33	30	16	6	4	2.0
4/83	10	32	35	14	4	5	2.3
6/83	9	33	32	18	4	4	1.9
7/83	11	32	31	18	4	3	2.0
8/83	9	32	34	16	5	4	2.0
9/83	11	35	31	16	5	4	2.2
10/83	9	33	32	16	5	4	2.0
12/83	9	33	32	16	5	4	2.0
1/84	8	34	34	16	4	5	2.1
2/84	10	35	31	16	4	5	2.3
3/84	10	35	30	16	4	5	2.3
4/84	8	32	35	17	5	4	1.8
5/84	10	35	30	17	4	5	2.1
7/84	8	32	32	17	5	5	1.8
8/84	10	34	33	15	4	4	2.3
9/84	8	31	35	17	4	5	1.9
10/84	8	33	33	17	4	4	2.0
12/84	11	34	31	14	4	4	2.5
1/85	9	36	32	15	4	4	2.4
2/85	8	32	36	16	5	4	1.9
6/85	11	33	32	17	5	4	2.0
7/85	10	31	34	17	4	4	2.0
8/85	11	33	30	15	5	5	2.2
9/85	12	32	33	15	4	4	2.3
10/85	11	31	32	16	5	7	2.0
12/85	12	32	32	16	4	4	2.2
1/86	11	32	31	16	5	6	2.0
2/86	10	34	31	15	5	5	2.2
3/86	10	35	31	14	4	4	2.5
4/86	11	33	31	17	5	5	2.0
5/86	11	33	31	16	5	5	2.1
7/86	12	31	30	16	6	5	2.0
8/86	10	34	31	15	5	4	2.2
9/86	12	31	32	16	5	5	2.0

SEVEN RESPONSE CATEGORIES—UNFILTERED

General Social Survey (NORC) (*N* = 1397+): We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. I'm going to show you a seven-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal to extremely conservative. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this?

	EC	*Con*	*SC*	*Mod*	*SL*	*Lib*	*EL*	*C/L Ratio*
2/74	3	11	16	40	15	14	2	1.0
2/75	3	11	17	40	14	13	3	1.0
2/76	2	14	16	40	13	13	2	1.1
2/77	3	12	17	39	15	12	3	1.1
2/78	2	13	18	38	17	10	2	1.1
2/80	3	13	18	41	15	9	3	1.3
2/82	4	14	14	41	15	10	2	1.2
2/83	3	14	19	41	13	9	2	1.3
2/84	3	13	20	40	13	9	2	1.5
2/85	3	15	19	39	12	11	2	1.5
2/86	3	15	17	41	13	9	2	1.4

EC = Extremely Conservative; *Con* = Conservative; *SC* = Slightly Conservative; *Mod* = Moderate, Middle-of-the-Road; *SL* = Slightly Liberal; *Lib* = Liberal; *EL* = Extremely Liberal.

SEVEN RESPONSE CATEGORIES—FILTERED

Center for Political Studies (University of Michigan) (*N* = 1500+): We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. Here is a seven-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal to extremely conservative. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this?

	EC	*Con*	*SC*	*Mod*	*SL*	*Lib*	*EL*	*DK*	*C/L Ratio*
12/72	1	10	14	26	9	7	1	31	1.4
12/74	2	11	12	26	8	11	2	27	1.3
10/76	2	11	12	25	8	7	1	33	1.6
12/78	2	11	14	27	10	8	2	27	1.4
10/80	2	13	13	20	9	6	2	36	1.7
12/82	2	12	13	22	8	6	1	36	1.8
10/84	2	13	14	23	9	7	2	30	1.6

EC = Extremely Conservative; *Con* = Conservative; *SC* = Slightly Conservative; *Mod* = Moderate, Middle-of-the-Road; *SL* = Slightly Liberal; *Lib* = Liberal; *EL* = Extremely Liberal.

LEFT–RIGHT DIMENSION

Gallup (AIPO) (*N* = 1509+): People who are conservative in their political Gallup views are referred to as being right of center and people who are liberal in their political views are referred to as being left of center. Which of these categories best describe your own political position?

	FR	*SR*	*MR*	*JSR*	*JSL*	*ML*	*SL*	*FL*	*MOR*	*DK*	*C/L Ratio*
10/84	5	7	20	17	12	11	4	2	12	11	1.7
5/85	4	7	20	19	14	12	5	2	12	7	1.5
4/86	3	6	19	22	14	13	4	3	11	7	1.5

FR = Far Right; *SR* = Substantially Right; *MR* = Moderately Right; *JSR* = Just Slightly Right; *JSL* = Just Slightly Left; *ML* = Moderately Left; *SL* = Substantially Left; *FL* = Far Left; *MOR* = Middle-of-the-Road; *DK* = Don't Know.

CPS FEELING THERMOMETER—AVERAGE TEMPERATURES

Reported in degrees (*N* = 1200+): Where would you put (liberals/conservatives) on the feeling thermometer? Zero degrees indicates very cold or unfavorable feeling; 50 degrees is no feeling at all; 97 degrees is very warm or favorable feeling.

	Feelings Toward Conservatives	*Feelings Toward Liberals*	*Conservative–Liberal Difference*
1964	51.1	53.2	−2.2
1966	55.9	50.4	+5.5
1968	56.9	51.1	+5.8
1970	52.9	43.3	+9.6
1972	61.4	53.8	+7.6
1974	61.3	54.1	+7.1
1976	58.9	53.1	+5.6
1980	62.7	51.7	+11.0
1982	53.3	45.7	+7.6
1984	60.0	56.0	+4.0

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NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

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BELIEVABILITY AND THE PRESS

MICHAEL J. ROBINSON AND
ANDREW KOHUT

Abstract This study looks at believability ratings assigned to 39 news organizations and news personalities by a nationally representative sample of 2,104 adult men and women. The data provide three major findings about the believability of the American press, all of which, at least in part, tend to be at odds with much of the conventional wisdom and some of the contemporary research dealing with the credibility of the news media. First, the overwhelming majority of the general public believes most of what it hears, sees, or reads in the nation's press. Second, perceived "believability" of the news media is *not* closely related to those political and demographic variables that typically divide public opinion in America. Third, the public does "group" the news media in terms of "believability," but the groupings do not equate with the dichotomy usually drawn between television and print journalism.

Is there a credibility crisis for the press? Part of the problem in answering that question has to do with the definition of "credibility"; part has to do with the definition of "the press."

In 1985 the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) published the results of their year-long study of public attitudes toward the news media (McGrath, 1985a). Their conclusion—that three-fourths of the public has some serious reservations about the credibility of the press—made clear that there is a real image problem for the media. But the ASNE definition of credibility was very broadly gauged. It included dimensions of press image that ranged from the rudeness and insensitivity of news reporters to the accuracy of their copy. And the questions that ASNE asked were often about news forms in general—as is true with most credibility research (Whitney, 1985).

But what does the public say if the issue is more narrowly drawn? What if credibility is defined specifically as *believability?* And what if the public is given only *specific* news organizations to evaluate? Would

MICHAEL J. ROBINSON is Associate Professor of Government at Georgetown University. ANDREW KOHUT is President of the Gallup Organization.

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specificity like this cause us to reconsider previous findings or conclusions about the credibility of the news media? Apparently yes. When the question about credibility is posed in this fashion the answers are, in fact, somewhat different from those that have come before (Harris, 1981; Alter, 1984; McGrath, 1985b). Results from this set of national surveys present a somewhat surprising picture of attitudes toward the press, although there already does exist a revisionist interpretation of the credibility problem (Harris, 1984; Shaw, 1985; Meyer, 1985; Schneider and Lewis, 1985).

When asked directly about the *believability* of news organizations and newspeople—specific news organizations and people—Americans express generally positive opinions about the press. Nor is there very much variation in opinion about press believability among the various political and sociological groups that typically divide public opinion in America. To suppose that believability of the press varies substantially from one demographic or ideological group to the next is, to a surprising degree, an incorrect inference.

Perhaps equally surprising is the fact that the public does not draw any clear distinction between print and television news, at least not in terms of believability. While many, if not most, credibility research studies adopt an a priori classification that pits broadcast journalism against print reporting, the public does not categorize the news media quite that way.

Method

In spring 1985 the Times Mirror Company commissioned the Gallup Organization to conduct a multistage set of surveys at the national level. A pilot survey was conducted in April, two other phone surveys were conducted in August and November 1985, and follow-up surveys were conducted in July and December 1986. But the main survey, and the one from which most of the findings in this article are drawn, was conducted during June and July 1985.

During the June and July survey, Gallup interviewed 2,104 adults in their homes, asking respondents more than 150 separate questions in interviews lasting, on average, an hour and ten minutes. The sample was drawn using the standard national sampling techniques employed by Gallup in its preelection polling.[1] The sampling error for this size sample is plus or minus three percentage points.

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[1] The design is that of a replicated probability sample, down to the block level in the case of urban areas and to segments of townships in the case of rural areas. There were approximately 180 sampling locations. The sample design included stratification by four

The data used in this article are derived mainly from one believability item, repeated 39 times in the June–July survey, with only the name of the news organization or the news person changed in each successive reiteration of the original question. The question reads as follows:

> Please rate how much you think you can believe each organization (the following people) I name on a scale of 4 to 1. On this 4-point scale, "4" means you can believe *all or most* of what they say and "1" means you can believe *almost nothing* of what they say.

Findings

BELIEVABILITY: MEASURES FOR THE PUBLIC AT LARGE

Absolute scores. Among those respondents who expressed an "on-scale" opinion, there was (and remains) little question that hard news organizations and newspeople are "believable"; a few news sources were considered "highly believable." In absolute terms, any mean higher than 2.0 indicates a greater number of believers than doubters. Only the *National Enquirer* and *Rolling Stone* failed this admittedly "easy" test.

The ordering of people and organizations in Table 1 presents few surprises. Walter Cronkite was, as anchor, America's most trusted person; in a national survey conducted four years after his retirement, he still maintained his status as most believable. The ordering for other news personalities was what one might expect, with anchormen receiving the highest scores and correspondents and commentators doing slightly less well.

Softer news organizations—*Parade, People, USA Today*—consistently rated lower than hard news organizations. The only clear exception to the rule was *Reader's Digest*, a soft news magazine that did as well as most hard news sources.

What is perhaps most surprising in Table 1 is that virtually all serious news sources did well in terms of believability. Consider, for example, CBS News. During 1985, a year in which CBS News was, more than any other news organization, the focus of controversy concerning credibility, only 1% of the national public gave CBS the lowest possible scores for believability. Despite the Westmoreland suit against CBS

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size-of-community strata, each of which was further stratified into seven geographic regions.

Allowance for persons not at home was made by a "time-at-home" weighting procedure. Also, minor adjustments of the sample were made for educational attainment by men and women separately, based on the annual estimates of the Census Bureau, and by age.

Table 1. Mean Believability Scores for News Organizations and Newspeople

	Score	*N*	Percent DK, No Opinion
Walter Cronkite	3.49	2002	6
Dan Rather	3.31	1930	9
Peter Jennings	3.29	1742	18
Ted Koppel	3.29	1549	28
Wall Street Journal	3.28	1203	44
David Brinkley	3.27	1876	13
John Chancellor	3.27	1718	21
Tom Brokaw	3.25	1676	22
MacNeil-Lehrer	3.22	916	58
CBS News	3.20	2022	4
Local TV news	3.20	2000	5
CNN	3.20	1090	48
ABC News	3.20	2007	4
Time	3.18	1638	23
NBC News	3.18	2015	4
Mike Wallace	3.17	1838	14
Reader's Digest	3.16	1786	16
Newsweek	3.15	1569	26
Radio news	3.13	1854	11
Daily newspapers	3.11	2002	5
Paul Harvey	3.08	1566	28
Associated Press	3.06	1583	26
Diane Sawyer	3.06	1293	40
Sam Donaldson	3.06	1201	44
Barbara Walters	3.03	1967	7
Bill Moyers	3.01	1165	46
Geraldo Rivera	2.99	1236	41
National newspapers	2.99	1384	35
"All Things Considered"	2.98	885	58
George Will	2.95	638	70
USA Today	2.93	1123	46
RONALD REAGAN	2.84	2077	2
Phil Donahue	2.71	1893	11
Jack Anderson	2.71	1109	51
Parade	2.54	1046	50
Ann Landers	2.51	1860	12
People	2.38	1433	31
Rolling Stone	1.99	830	58
National Enquirer	1.49	1604	24

and the public attempt by Fairness in Media to take over the network for alleged liberal bias, the ratio of highest scores to lowest scores for CBS was about 25 to 1. And in this respect CBS was much like all other major news sources.

Note, too, that CBS proved to be typical in another way: most Americans with an opinion gave CBS a "3" for believability, not a "4." Only Cronkite, the *Wall Street Journal*, and the MacNeil-Lehrer News Hour receive a modal score of "4"; all other major news sources or newspeople receive a plurality or a majority score of "3."

Another interesting finding pertaining to CBS, NBC, and ABC is that the anchormen do better than their respective networks in terms of believability. While Table 1 provides only mixed evidence for the thesis that broadcast sources are more believable than print sources, it does suggest that anchormen are somewhat more believable than the news organizations employing them.

This finding does not, in fact, prove to be merely artifactual—the consequence of large variations in the number of "off-scale" responses. Anchors and networks all elicit very high levels of "scalable" response.[2]

The Reagan comparison: Then and now. In comparative terms the news media also did well. When using favorability scores instead of believability scores, we found that the major news organizations were more positively regarded than any other political groups or institutions on our list, a list that included Congress, the CIA, business corporations, the military, the freeze movement, the women's movement, and labor unions (Gallup, 1986).

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[2] The mean scores that appear in Table 1 do *not* include information on nonresponses, but the last column does include the percentage of "off-scale" responses for each individual news source.

Respondents in this survey could (and did) tell us that they could not rate, or had not heard of, particular news sources. There is wide variability in the level of "off-scale" responses toward these 39 sources. In fact, these figures reveal surprisingly high levels of nonopinion toward several news sources one might consider fairly visible.

We have chosen to present our believability findings on the basis of "on-scale" responses only, for three reasons. The first is that there are very few "off-scale" responses for those sources that represent the heart of the news system for the national audience.

The second justification for setting aside nonresponses is an empirical relationship discovered in these data that makes other common approaches to "off-scale" responses seem less appropriate. Those who fall in the highest quartile in terms of "press knowledge" are at least twice as likely as those in the lowest quartile to express an opinion on our believability items.

There is also a modest *negative* correlation between "press knowledge" and "press believability"; those who know more are slightly less likely to give higher scores for believability. It is possible that those who did not respond are actually more likely to express higher scores than the rest of the population. So our technique of ignoring "off-scale" responses has understated, if modestly, the actual believability of the press.

Finally, excluding "off-scale" responses makes substantive sense—it is more consistent with the theoretical issue at hand. The case here involves believability, not visibility.

As for believability, we included only one direct comparison between the press and "something" else. We compared press believability with the believability score the public granted, at the time, to President Reagan.

At the time of the original survey Reagan's believability was quite high for a practicing political leader. Indeed, at the time (summer 1985) only 12% of the population gave Reagan a "1" (lowest score) for believability. Yet even during his most successful year in terms of public approval, Reagan's believability mean was "only" 2.84, significantly lower than the mean score achieved for 31 news organizations and journalists.

Even before the Iran-Contra affair erupted, Reagan's believability score was lower than that for all but three news media personalities; only Phil Donahue, Jack Anderson, and Ann Landers received lower scores than the president in 1985. He fell far behind all the network anchors (by about half a point on a four-point scale) and also ran behind all the network news correspondents—reporters as controversial as Sam Donaldson, Barbara Walters, and Mike Wallace. In this survey conducted in mid-1985, even Geraldo Rivera—perhaps the most controversial network news reporter on the original list—earned a higher believability score than Reagan.

Comparing believability of newspeople and political leaders may not be fair to politicians under any circumstances. Surveys have consistently shown the news media to be regarded as more honest than political leaders (ABC Viewpoint Poll, 1984; Los Angeles Times Poll, 1981). But at the time the Reagan comparison had—and still has—real utility for those interested in assessing the believability of the press, primarily because President Reagan was, at the time of these interviews, regarded as something of a benchmark in terms of public trust and approbation.

What the 1985 survey indicates is that President Reagan, even at his peak, never approached the press in terms of believability. In fact, our data from 1985 also show that the public regarded the press more *favorably* than it did Reagan: Reagan's mean favorability score in mid-1985 was 2.88; for network news the figure was 3.14 (Gallup, 1986).

In December 1986 Gallup returned to the field and asked 1,502 respondents, by phone, some of the same believability questions it had originally asked about Reagan and several visible news sources in 1985. The December 1986 follow-up survey shows that the Iran-Contra affair had substantial impact on both the believability of the president and the press. The president's mean believability score fell from 2.84 (1985) to 2.48 during the last month of 1986. As Table 2 shows, the press's believability scores fell, in *absolute* terms, as much as the president's.

Table 2. Believability Scores for Reagan and Five News Sources: Comparisons Between Summer 1985 and the Month Following Revelations About the Iran-Contra Affair

	Summer 1985	*N*	December 1986	*N*
Peter Jennings	3.29	1742	2.97	1351
Dan Rather	3.31	1930	2.94	1422
Tom Brokaw	3.25	1676	2.94	1374
Daily newspaper most familiar with	3.11	2002	2.78	1457
Network news[a]	3.19	2015[b]	2.84	1477
RONALD REAGAN	2.84	2077	2.48	1477

[a] Mean believability score for the three networks combined (ABC, CBS, and NBC).
[b] Average number of interviews for the three networks.

In light of earlier research, the fact that the press *and* the president fell together, and in nearly equal proportion, during the first several months of the Iran-Contra affair is somewhat surprising. In one of the most comprehensive investigations ever conducted on the topic of public faith in political institutions, Lipset and Schneider (1983) found that when confidence in the presidency was diminished, confidence in the press was usually enhanced. Why the inconsistency? It may well be that our before and after measures corroborate earlier experimental research which indicates that *unresolved* factual disputes between the press and the government diminish the credibility of both the media and the administration (Robinson, 1977).

Whatever else these findings indicate, they certainly suggest that the believability of the press has been, and remains, significantly and substantially greater than the believability of President Reagan.

CORRELATES OF BELIEVABILITY

Demographic variables. Although some surveys (McGrath, 1985a; Immerwahr and Doble, 1982) do emphasize demographic patterns in attitudes toward the press, our research tends to corroborate those earlier studies that emphasized the relatively weak relationships between standard demographic variables and attitudes toward the news media.

Whitney (1985), in an extensive review of the literature, concludes that attitudes toward the press are only weakly correlated with those demographic variables one might expect to be linked with credibility, image, etc. Lipset and Schneider (1983) also discovered that social and political groups do not vary much in their feelings toward the press.

Table 3. Correlation Scores for Each of the Three Major Networks and Several Social and Political Variables

	ABC	CBS	NBC
Age	−.11**	−.11**	−.09**
Sex	.15**	.16**	.14**
Educational status	−.12**	−.10**	−.11**
Occupational status	.03	.01	.00
Party (Republicanism)	−.08**	−.13**	−.10*
Ideology (political conservatism)	.01	−.06**	.01
Reagan approval	−.09**	−.11**	−.08*
Social alienation	−.04**	.06*	−.03
Military service	−.08**	−.10*	−.10*
News consumption	−.02	−.03	−.04
Knowledge about press	−.16**	−.20**	−.21**

NOTE: Correlations used are gammas.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Our findings in Table 3 focus on the relationship between demographic variables and the believability of *network news*.[3] This focus actually overstates the relationship between believability and demography—network news is more likely than most forms of press to elicit a demographic pattern of response. Yet Table 3 indicates that while there is some statistically significant relationship between attitudes toward believability of the networks and one's demographic characteristics, these relationships are modest. Occupational status, for example, has no relationship whatever with believability.

3. The occupational status index and other indices in Table 3 that are not self-evident are briefly outlined below:

The *occupational status* index is based on a question asking respondents to choose one of the 15 categories which best describes the kind of work they do. For example: professional worker, skilled tradesman, sales worker, service worker.

The *ideology* index is based on asking respondents to place themselves on a scale from 1 to 6, where 1 represents conservative and 6 represents liberal.

The *social alienation* index is constructed from six Lickert scale items. Examples: "Most people really do care what happens to the next fellow," "Money is the most important factor influencing public policies," "People like me don't have any say about what the government does."

The *news consumption* index is composed of a number of questions measuring frequency of reading newspapers, watching television news programs, and listening to the radio. The index also includes, among other items, the amount of attention given to various items in a daily newspaper and in a television newscast.

The *knowledge* index comprises 11 closed-ended items testing knowledge of such concepts as press release, ownership of major news organizations, the division of labor within a newspaper, etc.

For further information on these indices, please contact the authors.

Military background is statistically associated with believability. As one might expect, respondents from families with some personal tie to the armed services have slightly less positive attitudes toward the believability of the networks. Even alienation proves to be a weak predictor, as in past research (Becker, Cobbey, and Sobowale, 1978).

Among the more powerful demographic correlates are age and gender. Believability is for all three networks statistically associated with youthfulness. The youngest adults (18–24) awarded the highest scores for believability. The strongest demographic relationship, however, is with gender. While a cluster analysis for these same survey data indicates that age is, at best, a weak element in groupings of attitudes toward the news media, sex of the respondent remains an important factor in attitudes toward the press—in general, and in reference specifically to believability. This statistic translates into a five-percentage-point difference between men and women in terms of network believability, with women consistently somewhat more willing to believe the news media.

Political variables. Political variables also produce mixed findings. Party identification proves to be a modest, but statistically significant, predictor of network believability: the average gamma for the three networks combined is .1. Precisely the same results emerge when one correlates attitudes toward Reagan with believability of the press—those who approve of Reagan are slightly less likely to believe the press (average gamma = .1).

What is interesting, however, is that "political conservatism" on sociopolitical issues does not correlate with believability. Only with CBS is one able to find any correlation between political philosophy and believability—and it is very modest indeed.

This pattern with CBS exists throughout: political variables are consistently more likely to predict believability scores for CBS than for any of the other commercial networks. It would appear, then, that the long-running conflict between CBS and the conservative movement in America has had a slightly polarizing effect in terms of public opinion.

Nonetheless, the overall conclusion for Table 3 appears to be that political variables are not particularly strong correlates of believability. Although other forms of press-related opinion, especially questions involving *freedom of the press,* are substantially related to political viewpoint, believability is not. At best our findings as to ideology corroborate those of earlier research (Lipset and Schneider, 1983; Gunther and Lasora, 1985). The most *extreme* respondents—on the right and on the left—are less likely to believe the press. But there is very little right/left division to believability.

Information variables. While patterns of news consumption are unrelated to believability of the news media, informational variables are related. As Table 3 indicates, level of education correlates significantly, and negatively, with believability (mean gamma = −.11).

However, the largest relationship in Table 3 involves a special sort of information—information specifically about the press. This relationship has appeared in other research (Whitney, 1984), and is sustained when controls are applied. Our clustering analysis also indicates that knowledge about the press is disproportionately held by those who think least positively about the press (Kohut and Robinson, 1986).

Do all these statistical relationships mean what they imply—that *learning* more about the press actually contributes to a decrease in believability? We cannot answer the question for certain, although there are several qualifications to consider before addressing the issue of causation.

First, the relationship does not apply to all the media. The Associated Press, the *Wall Street Journal,* "All Things Considered," and the MacNeil-Lehrer News Hour are not considered less believable by those who know most about the press. In fact, for MacNeil-Lehrer the correlation goes in the opposite direction.

Second, the negative relationship, while significant, is weak when translated into difference in raw scores. The mean believability score for the networks among the entire sample is 3.19 (out of 4.0); for the highest quartile in terms of press knowledge the mean is 3.06. Compared to the drop in believability suffered by the press during the early months of the Iran-Contra affair, that difference is modest.

Third, the relationship between knowledge and believability applies not just to the news media but to a host of political actors and institutions. For example, those who are most knowledgeable about the press are also slightly less likely to believe President Reagan. And earlier research also indicates that education and information are negatively correlated with trust in religion, television, labor, the military, and even educational institutions (Lipset and Schneider, 1983). There may well be an inherent tendency for those who are more sophisticated and informed to be less trusting of all politically related institutions, especially mass or commercially based institutions. Still, even if typical, this relationship between sophistication and institutional confidence appears not to be wholly artifactual.

Whatever the normal patterns of public confidence, to the degree that there is a believability crisis (or problem) for the news media, there can be little question that problems exist principally in the negative relationship between press knowledge and press believability.

BELIEVABILITY: TYPES OF NEWS SOURCES

During the past 25 years, an assumption underpinning much of the survey research about the press has been that the public divides the news world into two major "hemispheres"—print and television. We tested this assumption statistically in two ways. First we examined the zero-order correlations among the various believability scores for all news sources. Second, we analyzed those same data using principal components factor analysis (orthogonal rotation). What the correlational analysis implied, the factor analysis confirmed.

The factor analysis indicated that there are no less than four strains of believability that overarch evaluations of specific news organizations. And surprising as it may seem, none of these dimensions of believability suggests a clear differentiation between print sources and broadcast sources. While one dimension does seem to involve broadcast *personalities,* news organizations are not, in the public mind, easily grouped along a print/broadcasting dimension, at least not in terms of their believability.

"Routine" news sources. To begin, there is a dimension here that includes what we consider to be the "routine" media. Routine, in essence, means the typical daily sources that Americans rely on for the bulk of their everyday news: the major networks, local broadcast, *and* the respondent's own local newspaper (Table 4).

Networks are very much a major element in what we label routine news sources. What one thinks of one network is, pretty much, what one thinks of another.[4] It is hardly surprising to find the public lumping the major commercial networks together; nor is it particularly surprising that network news and local broadcasts load heavily on this factor.

What is surprising is that this first factor is not a *broadcasting* factor per se. Loading about as heavily as local broadcast news on this dimension are attitudes toward one's own newspaper (defined here as the newspaper one is most familiar with). That local print loads so heavily on this factor suggests that respondents do not divide the world of believability into two hemispheres, one print and one broadcast. Instead, they define one element of that world as daily and unexceptional—in other words, as *routine* sources.

The sources loading high on this factor (the networks, the local broadcasts, and the local dailies) are *not* considered less believable than the more exotic news sources. Indeed, they are among the most believable, especially among the young, minorities, and those not particularly knowledgeable about the press. But these routine sources are regarded, apparently, as a group that represents the "daily news" in contemporary America.

"Special" news sources. A second believability strain might be

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[4] The zero-order correlations among the three networks approach .8. Not even *Time* and *Newsweek* can elicit nearly the degree of shared opinion ($r = .59$) that the networks produce. The networks are not a "class" of news per se, but clearly they are a major element in this category we have labeled "routine" sources.

Table 4. Factors of Believability

	Routine News Sources	Special News Sources	Soft News Sources	Personalities
Daily newspapers	.447	.148	.220	.100
National newspapers	.217	.531	−.075	.181
Wall Street Journal	.009	.665	−.092	.119
USA Today	.105	.513	.253	.105
Associated Press	.258	.548	.061	.208
Time	.213	.540	.258	.146
Parade	.060	.241	.480	.054
People	.178	.051	.647	.029
Reader's Digest	.126	.180	.455	.112
Rolling Stone	−.002	−.058	.228	.062
Newsweek	.168	.563	.221	.199
National Enquirer	.101	−.140	.367	−.076
NBC News	.757	.269	.067	.260
ABC News	.787	.246	.070	.253
CBS News	.749	.206	.060	.320
MacNeil-Lehrer	−.018	.413	−.211	.258
CNN	.161	.378	.011	.213
Local TV news	.568	.041	.275	.201
Radio news	.456	.133	.248	.225
"All Things Considered"	.130	.186	.015	.214
Ronald Reagan	.033	.047	.232	.041
Jack Anderson	.016	.036	.149	.305
David Brinkley	.214	.175	.086	.599
Tom Brokaw	.201	.187	.052	.674
John Chancellor	.136	.285	.025	.656
Walter Cronkite	.184	.124	.083	.595
Phil Donahue	.211	.086	.231	.328
Sam Donaldson	.153	.108	.060	.572
Paul Harvey	−.031	.014	.348	.278
Peter Jennings	.254	.192	.113	.628
Ted Koppel	.167	.219	.033	.603
Ann Landers	.134	−.011	.391	.214
Bill Moyers	−.037	.237	−.037	.467
Dan Rather	.275	.078	.111	.648
Geraldo Rivera	.159	.033	.296	.410
Diane Sawyer	.126	.142	.094	.602
Mike Wallace	.229	.093	.148	.586
Barbara Walters	.264	.063	.290	.410
George Will	−.021	.132	.089	.260
Variance explained	9%	8%	6%	14%
Total variance explained	36%			

labeled "special" media: the newsweeklies, the *Wall Street Journal,* AP, and "nationally influential newspapers."

For the most part, special sources can be thought of as "serious." Indeed, all the prestige print sources included in this survey—the *Journal,* the eastern press establishment, the newsweeklies—load heavily on this factor. But the public also includes in this dimension sources that the media themselves regard as not so serious. Neither *USA Today* nor CNN are considered serious by most members of the press. Yet both sources load on this factor. That the public groups *USA Today* and CNN with other prestige news sources is something of a puzzle. But the public's behavior—at least in terms of believability—underscores what we've already said: the public divides the news media into categories in ways foreign to press critics, and print and broadcast sources are often grouped *together* in the public mind, not separately. MacNeil-Lehrer and *USA Today* both load heavily on this dimension that some might reasonably label serious news.

One might ask whether this really is "serious news," given these anomalies, but the audience for these sources does suggest that the factor has a "serious" element associated with it. The people who score high on this dimension possess virtually all the characteristics of a serious news audience. Disproportionately likely to be men, Caucasian, college-educated, urban, and interested in public affairs, these people mirror the demographic profile so long associated with the serious news audience.

Still, given the inclusion of news sources not easily characterized as serious, it may well be that our second category has as its common denominator something other than weightiness, and that common denominator is exceptionalism. If nothing else, all these sources are outside the workaday news channels for most Americans.

"Soft" news sources. There is a third dimension of source believability; those sources that load heavily on this dimension are the news media's "third world." In the vernacular of the press, these are the "soft news" media. Not surprisingly, *Parade, Reader's Digest,* Ann Landers, and Paul Harvey help define this category by loading heavily on this third factor. To disbelieve one of these sources is, for the most part, to disbelieve the other three.

Unfortunately, our questionnaire did not ask about *programs* such as "Entertainment Tonight" (soft news broadcasts). Consequently, we do not know whether the public groups soft print and soft broadcasting together. We do know, however, that these soft sources are very much a package in the public mind.

Those who score "high" on this dimension are, in most respects, the mirror image of those who think positively about serious (special) news sources. People giving high believability scores to soft news sources are likely to be low in income, low in education, and uninterested in the press or national politics.

Personalities. To this point the dimensions of believability have helped us group news organizations. But these data also produce a fourth factor—indeed a powerful factor, but one that runs not to organizations so much as news *personalities*.

Loading on this dimension are all the anchors, past and present, and all the most visible network news correspondents. Factor loadings seem to be directly related to the amount of air time these personalities receive. Anchors load most heavily; correspondents load the least. One might be tempted to regard this factor as evidence that the anchors not only achieve high levels of believability, but that they also define a media "class" in the public mind.

There are real differences between a factor that is built around types of sources and one that builds around individuals. Still, there is little question, given the strength of this factor, that the public does award (or deny) believability on the basis of celebrity, or at least "visibility."

THE BELIEVABILITY OF PRINT AND TELEVISION

In the literature dealing with credibility, no "issue" has generated more research, or disputation, than what one might call the "Roper" issue—whether television is more believable than print.[5] According to one study, at least 14 scholarly articles have used the Roper question (in one form or another), trying to answer what Roper first asked in 1959 (Gaziano and McGrath, 1985) or trying to dispute the Roper approach per se (Shaw, 1973).

Our own research approached this issue directly and indirectly. Looking at the most direct test of the Roper thesis, there is some hard evidence to support the theory of television as more believable. When asked "Are there any specific types of news organizations that you feel are likely to get the facts straight," our respondents mentioned television sources over print sources in a ratio of three-to-two. Yet respondents also said that local television is *less* likely to be factual than the nation's major dailies.

Our factor analysis also indicates that the public clearly differentiates among types of broadcast sources. While the networks and the local broadcast news outlets do hang together closely in public thinking, other broadcast sources are evaluated as very much separate from network news or local television. When respondents are given specific news organizations for evaluation, the advantage television seemingly enjoys slips considerably. "Soft" television is far less believable than "hard" print.

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[5] Since 1959, the Roper Organization has repeatedly asked the following item to determine the relative credibility of general news sources. "If you got conflicting or different reports of the same news story from radio, television, the magazines, and the newspapers, which of the four versions would you be most inclined to believe—the one on radio or television or magazines or newspapers?" (Roper, 1985).

Television news*people* tend to do very well in terms of believability: anchormen do especially well. But here, too, the issue is clouded. Phil Donahue, a television personality, does badly.

Conclusions

No conclusion is more important than our first: there is no believability crisis for the press. While our data show that the public has serious reservations about some press techniques, the clear majority of the public considers the press believable—and considers specific, mainline sources as substantially more believable than "the press" in general.

Second, we conclude that opinions about believability are broadly shared among the various social and political groups in America that typically divide our politics. Even when we turned to the factor analysis, the demographic profiles for those scoring high (or low) on the various factors were, at best, tendencies.

Third, we conclude that believability does not inhere in any one particular technology. To a degree, the Roper issue—and the Roper thesis—presupposes a classification of news media that doesn't conform well with public attitudes concerning believability. Given a chance to rate specific sources, the public makes clear that technology (print versus video news) is *not* the hook upon which its opinions hang. In essence, this debate about print versus broadcast news is somewhat misdirected.

Fourth, while personality is a factor in believability—and while some Americans trust persons as opposed to sources—the majority of the public still assigns believability more as a factor of organization than celebrity. What matters most is neither personality nor technology. What matters most is news "type," where "type" pertains mainly to the *kind* of journalism the source is perceived to be practicing. And major establishment press sources are grouped together as believable—whether print or broadcast.

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THE EVAPORATING INDEPENDENTS

REMOVING THE "INDEPENDENT" OPTION FROM THE NES PARTY IDENTIFICATION QUESTION

PATRICK J. KENNEY AND
TOM W. RICE

Abstract In this brief paper we contend that the number and composition of individuals identifying with no political party may change substantially when the "Independent" option is omitted from the classic National Election Study (NES) party identification question. Data from two surveys of Vermont residents reveal that when the independent choice is not presented the percentage of self-identified independents drops significantly. Moreover, the relationship between age and partisanship varied depending on whether or not the nonpartisan choice was given. When the independent option was announced, a much higher percentage of younger than older respondents chose the option, but with the nonpartisan choice omitted, more older individuals actually opted to identify as independents. A similar analysis using nationwide survey data from the Roper Organization and NES supports our Vermont conclusions.

The increase in Americans not claiming allegiance to a political party is one of the most significant trends in United States electoral politics over the last quarter century. As gauged by the widely used National Election Study (NES) question "Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?" the percentage of respondents selecting the independent option has grown from just above 20% in the 1950s and early 1960s to approximately 35% in the 1970s and early 1980s. Not surprisingly, this increase has been studied intensely, with scholars researching what the shift signals for the future of the party system (Burnham, 1970; Sundquist, 1983), who

PATRICK J. KENNEY is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at Arizona State University. TOM W. RICE is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Vermont. The names of the authors appear in alphabetical order, implying that this study is in every way a collaborative enterprise. The authors thank John E. Stanga and Nicholas L. Danigelis for their assistance in developing this article.

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are the new independents (Abramson, 1976; Converse, 1976; Shively, 1979; Claggett, 1981; Norpoth and Rusk, 1982), and what prompted the movement away from parties (Burnham, 1970; Jennings and Niemi, 1974; Jennings and Markus, 1984).

While such attention has yielded a rich understanding of the trend toward political independence as measured by the NES question, it is important to remember that the NES query is only one way of tapping partisanship. Indeed, recent research has revealed partisanship to be a much more complex psychological concept than recognized a few decades ago. For example, Katz (1979), Valentine and Van Wingen (1980), and Weisberg (1980) contend that partisanship is multidimensional—that a person can be both a partisan and an independent simultaneously. These and other studies (Wattenberg, 1981; Miller and Wattenberg, 1983) suggest the need to employ a variety of partisanship measures when studying the trend toward political independence. Put more strongly, to rely too heavily on the NES party identification question is to risk not fully understanding the recent shifts in party allegiance. The purpose of the present study is to examine this concern. Specifically, we show that altering just slightly the wording in the NES question apparently results in a shift in partisan responses. In addition, closer inspection suggests that the shift in partisanship produced by the altered NES survey instrument is due almost entirely to movement among younger individuals.

Research Design and Findings

As noted above, the standard NES party identification question includes "Independent" as a partisanship choice. While offering the independent category is certainly acceptable, it is quite likely that it enhances the chance that a respondent will identify as an independent. Research by Schuman and Presser (1981) and Bishop (1985) has demonstrated that individuals more readily select a middle response alternative when presented the option than when it is not offered. Although the independent category is not explicitly the middle alternative in the NES party identification question, it may well serve as such for a great number of people. The initial concern of this study, then, was to establish the effect of including the independent category in the party identification question. To do this we compared the results of two random sample surveys of residents of the state of Vermont. The first survey, conducted in 1984, employed a party identification question very similar to the NES question. In the second, conducted a year later, the independent option was inadvertently omitted. The omission conveniently provided us the baseline necessary to examine the effects

Table 1. Party Identification, Vermont Surveys

Party Identification	"Independent" Included (1984)	"Independent" Omitted (1985)
Democrat	24.5%	28.0%
Independent	47.0	37.5
Republican	22.4	28.4
Other/Don't know	6.1	6.1
N	412	503

of including the independent option (for question wording and a description of the survey methods see the Appendix).

Table 1 summarizes the results of the party identification questions from the Vermont surveys. As anticipated, omitting the independent choice was associated with a reduction in the percentage of respondents calling themselves independents.[1] The magnitude of the fall was

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[1] Table 1 reveals that a larger percentage of Vermonters call themselves independents than individuals nationwide. The 1984 survey has 47.0% of Vermonters reporting as independents, while the SRC survey that year found 29.0% of Americans calling themselves independents. This political independence of Vermonters has long been recognized (Bryan, 1974; Peirce, 1976), and manifested itself recently in John Anderson's strong showing in the state in the 1980 presidential contest. Despite the large percentage of independents in Vermont, we see no reason why the broad trends in the forthcoming analysis could not be extrapolated nationwide.

The second half of the NES party identification question was asked in both the 1984 and 1985 surveys. The wording was indentical to that used by NES. Respondents who indicated they were Republicans or Democrats to the first part were asked, "Would you call yourself a strong (Republican/Democrat) or a not very strong (Republican/Democrat)?" Interviewees who identified themselves as independents to the first part were asked, "Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic Party?" Because the independent option was not an offered alternative to the first part of the party identification question in the 1985 survey, only those 1985 respondents who voiced their independent status without prompting were asked whether they felt close to the Republican or Democratic party.

The results of the party identification question after the follow-up probe was asked were

	1984	*1985*
Strong Democrats	12.6%	12.5%
Weak Democrats	11.9	15.5
Leaning Democrats	17.7	11.7
Independents	15.3	17.3
Leaning Republicans	14.0	8.5
Weak Republicans	9.6	16.7
Strong Republicans	12.8	11.7
Other/Don't know	6.1	6.1

It is interesting to note that the summation of the strong, weak, and leaning partisans across each survey produced quite similar percentages (78.6% for 1984 and 76.6% for 1985).

substantial, from 47.0% to 37.5%, or 9.5 percentage points. The chi-square statistic for Table 1 is 9.24, indicating that the drop in independents was significant at the .05 level. (When the "other" category is omitted and the data are partitioned into independents and partisans—Democrats and Republicans—the chi-square value is 8.92, significant at the .01 level.) The possibility exists, of course, that the reduction was due not to changes in question wording, but to a drop in self-identified independents over the year between surveys. While it is not possible to sort this out definitively with the data at hand, the regional Gallup Poll party identification data provides a modest check. According to the data (Gallup Poll, 1984, 1986), the percentage of independents in the East stayed almost constant over the period, with 25.0% of those surveyed claiming independence in the fall of 1984 compared with 26.0% one year later. The evidence, then, suggests that the drop in Vermonters who identified as independents was very likely due to omitting the independent option from the party identification question.

Our Vermont analysis may be partially replicated at the national level using survey data from the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research and NES. In a 15–16 October 1986 nationwide opinion poll the Roper Organization asked, "Regardless of how you may have voted in the past, what do you usually consider yourself—a Democrat, a Republican, some other party, or what?" Although this party identification question is not identical to the NES question minus the independent choice, the query does omit independent as a voiced option. When the results of the Roper question were compared with the 1984 NES data the pattern apparent in the Vermont analysis was repeated.[2] Table 2 shows that 33.9% of the NES respondents selected independent when presented the option, but in the Roper survey, where the independent option was not mentioned, only 21.8% voluntarily identified themselves as independents. The chi-square statistic for Table 2 is 52.95, indicating significance at the .001 level.

We turned our attention next to examining the relationship between age and party affiliation across the two Vermont surveys. Previous research has determined that younger individuals are more likely to identify as independents than older people (Shively, 1979; Miller and Wattenberg, 1983). Many of the young, scholars argue, have simply not developed the interest in politics which correlates with party affiliation. Given this, we anticipated that more young than old Vermont respondents would identify as independents to both the traditional NES question and the same question with the independent op-

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[2] It is unfortunate that there is a two-year time difference between the NES and Roper polls. However, at the time of this writing the 1986 NES data were not available and, according to Roper personnel, their 1986 question was not asked any nearer 1984.

Table 2. Party Identification, National Surveys

Party Identification	NES "Independent" Included (1984)	Roper "Independent" Omitted (1986)
Democrat	36.6%	41.7%
Independent	33.9	21.8
Republican	27.0	32.0
Other/Don't know	2.5	4.5
N	2237	1008

tion removed. Our expectations were only partially sustained. Table 3 reveals that when the independent option was mentioned, more young than old respondents selected it; approximately 54% of Vermonters aged 18 to 40 identified as independents compared to roughly 41% of those over 40. Surprisingly, however, when the independent option was not voiced, slightly more older than younger respondents volunteered independent status; across the four age categories the percent of Vermonters claiming independence increased gradually, from 34.4% among those 18 to 30 to 41.0% among those over 60.[3] Also quite striking, the percentage of respondents over 40 who identified as independents stayed almost constant across the two surveys, suggesting that older Vermont independents are firmly attached to their nonpartisan status. In sharp contrast, the percentage of independents among those 18 to 40 dropped dramatically when the independent choice was omitted. A three-way interaction test (Davis, 1975) revealed the relationship between age, question wording, and partisanship to be significant at the .05 level, $t = 2.87$. (For this test the "other" category was omitted. Democrats and Republicans were combined into a partisan category, and the age variable was collapsed into 18 to 40 and over 40.)[4]

[3] Previous research on offering and omitting middle alternatives (Schuman and Presser, 1981; Bishop, 1985) has not found aggregate opinion to increase with age, but such research has not used the party identification question.

[4] The age categories 18 to 40 and over 40 were selected for two reasons. First, there appeared to be a natural break in the data at that point. Second, and perhaps more important, 40 seemed a likely cut point on theoretical grounds. The 18 to 40 group includes the baby boom cohort and those even younger. The baby boom generation has always displayed political independence (Jennings and Markus, 1984) and the post–baby boom cohort should also include many independents simply because they have not had the time to accumulate the set of political experiences that help foster partisan loyalties. Conversely, those 41 and over have had the time to develop strong party ties and, moreover, were socialized in times when political parties were stronger.

Table 3. Party Identification by Age, Vermont Surveys

	Age							
	18–30		31–40		41–59		60+	
Party Identification	"Independent" Included (1984)	"Independent" Omitted (1985)	"Independent" Included (1984)	"Independent" Omitted (1985)	"Independent" Included (1984)	"Independent" Omitted (1985)	"Independent" Included (1984)	"Independent" Omitted (1985)
Democrat	18.6%	27.7%	23.1%	31.7%	28.9%	31.4%	25.0%	20.5%
Independent	54.7	34.4	53.7	36.6	42.1	39.8	40.6	41.0
Republican	19.8	34.4	19.4	28.2	23.7	23.7	26.0	28.2
Other/Don't know	7.0	3.4	3.7	3.5	5.3	5.1	8.3	10.3
N	86	119	108	142	114	118	96	117

Table 4. Party Identification by Age, National Surveys

	Age							
Party Identification	18–30 NES "Independent" Included (1984)	18–29 Roper "Independent" Omitted (1986)	31–40 NES "Independent" Included (1984)	30–44 Roper "Independent" Omitted (1986)	41–59 NES "Independent" Included (1984)	45–59 Roper "Independent" Omitted (1986)	60+ NES "Independent" Included (1984)	60+ Roper "Independent" Omitted (1986)
Democrat	31.4%	37.4%	32.6%	43.8%	41.5%	45.1%	41.1%	42.0%
Independent	41.5	15.8	37.3	25.0	30.1	22.1	26.0	23.8
Republican	24.0	42.7	27.0	25.4	26.4	28.4	31.1	31.7
Other/Don't know	3.1	4.1	3.1	5.8	2.0	4.4	1.8	2.5
N	621	279	515	306	554	197	547	222

A modest replication of these intriguing findings is again possible using the Roper Center and NES data. Table 4 presents the responses to the party identification questions from the two surveys controlling for age. (The Roper Center age categories vary slightly from those used throughout the rest of our study because the Center confined respondents' choices to these categories.)[5] The data conform closely to the Vermont results; when the independent option was given, younger respondents were more likely to select it than older interviewees, but when the independent choice was not mentioned, the young were no more likely than the old to volunteer nonpartisan status. Those 18 to 29 were actually the least likely to voice independence. A three-way interaction test (Davis, 1975) showed the data in Table 4 to be significant at the .05 level, $t = 2.29$. As above, before testing the "other" category was dropped, Democrats and Republicans were combined, and the age categories were recoded into 18 to 40 and over 40 for the NES study, and 18 to 44 and over 44 for the Roper survey.

Discussion

The above analysis reveals that patterns of partisanship may vary depending on the measurement technique employed. Data from two surveys of Vermont residents suggest that simply omitting "Independent" as an announced option in the standard NES party identification question prompts significantly fewer individuals to call themselves independents. A partial replication using nationwide data from the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research and NES showed much the same. With respect to party identification generally, these findings serve as a reminder of the difficulty of quantifying psychological attachment to a political party—even a minor alteration to a survey instrument can elicit a very different response.

Concerning recent trends in party identification specifically, the results bring to light an interesting relationship between age and political independence. Previous research indicates that the young are much more likely than the old to claim independence, but the Vermont data suggest that this may be contingent on the party identification instrument used. When omitting the independent option from the NES party identification question the percentage of young people choosing political independence was actually less than the percentage of older individuals opting for the nonpartisan position. And once again, comparable nationwide data from Roper and NES support the Vermont findings. This raises an interesting possibility: if the NES question had never included the independent option perhaps the percentage of nonpartisans would have remained much more stable over the last two decades. After all, the swelling of the independent ranks was due primarily to the large number of young who joined the electorate claiming independence.

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[5] In a separate analysis the NES age variable was recoded to match the Roper age categories. Once recoded, the NES cell percentages vary only slightly from those in Table 4 and the relationship is still significant.

Appendix: Survey Methods

For each of the surveys we began by assembling all of the Vermont telephone directories. From these directories two random samples of 1,000 residential telephone numbers were selected, one sample for each survey. We decided not to employ a random digit dialing technique because only 5% of the residential telephone numbers in the state are not listed in the directories, according to New England Telephone officials. All 1,000 numbers from both samples were called once. The first survey, conducted 6–7 October 1984, resulted in 412 useable interviews. Three completed questionnaires were discarded because of coding errors, 283 calls went unanswered, and 35 were disconnected numbers. The remaining 267 numbers reached individuals who refused to participate. The second survey, conducted 26–27 October 1985, produced 503 useable questionnaires. Of the remaining numbers, six resulted in completed interviews discarded because of coding problems, 226 calls went unanswered, 30 were disconnected numbers, and 235 calls reached individuals who refused to be interviewed. University of Vermont students, as part of class projects, served as interviewers. We verified the students' interviews by calling back approximately 5% of the respondents in each survey; in every case the respondent indicated that he or she had been interviewed.

A comparison of demographic data across surveys suggests similar sample composition. For instance, the breakdown for household income found 50.2% of the respondents reported making less than $20,000 in the 1984 survey compared to 52.6% the 1985 survey. As another example, 54.1% of the 1984 respondents were female compared to 53.5% of the 1985 respondents. The demographic variable which showed the most variance across surveys was age. When dichotomized, 48.0% of the 1984 respondents reported to be 40 or younger against 52.6% of the 1985 interviewees. Even here the difference is far from significant statistically (chi-square = 1.89, $p > .20$). Moreover, since a good portion of our analysis examines changes in party identification within age groups rather than between age groups, the minor differences in the age distributions across surveys are even less of a concern.

Below are the party identification questions asked of Vermonters for the analysis presented in Tables 1 and 2.

October 1984 survey: "Generally speaking, do you consider yourself to be a Democrat, Republican, or Independent?"

October 1985 survey: "Generally speaking, do you consider yourself to be a Democrat or Republican?"

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THE POLLS—A Report

THE IMPACT OF NUCLEAR ACCIDENTS ON ATTITUDES TOWARD NUCLEAR ENERGY

CONNIE DE BOER AND
INEKE CATSBURG

A nuclear power plant exploded in Chernobyl, Russia, on 26 April 1986. Cities and countries near the plant suffered from a high rate of radioactive fallout, but countries farther away like the Netherlands, Germany, France, and Great Britain also measured an increased level of radioactivity in the air, water, and soil. The incident was not the first accident in a nuclear plant: the accident at Three Mile Island, Pennsylvania, occurred on 28 March 1979, Great Britain also had trouble with a nuclear plant in Sellafield in 1985, and leaks have been found in nuclear plants in France and West Germany. This report concentrates on public reactions to these incidents and on longer-term changes that have occurred in public opinion on nuclear energy. Results of public opinion surveys from the United States, Canada, and European countries are presented.

After the accident at Three Mile Island there was no remarkable change in the perception of the safety of nuclear power plants in the United States. In Great Britain, shortly after the accident in Chernobyl, there was an increase in the percentages considering nuclear power plants not very safe and even dangerous. However, a year after the Chernobyl accident the survey results of this question are again very similar to the very stable answering patterns which were found in the previous years.

Similar to the results of the question on safety, British support for the construction of a nuclear power station in Britain was very stable in the period before Chernobyl. The percentage opposing construction then increased sharply, but tended to return to its "normal" level in 1987. In the United States opposition to the building of a nuclear power plant within five miles of one's home has increased steadily.

In Great Britain the percentage of the public wishing to increase

CONNIE DE BOER is Senior Researcher and Lecturer at the Baschwitz Institute, c/o Department of Communication, University of Amsterdam. INEKE CATSBURG, formerly Associate Researcher at the Baschwitz Institute, is currently employed in the banking industry.

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nuclear power generation declined in the period from July 1979 to January 1986. Shortly after Chernobyl there was a sharp drop in the percentages of the public favoring an increase in nuclear power generation. But similar to the British questions on safety and the construction of a nuclear power plant in one's neighborhood, this change in public opinion was temporary.

In all the countries from which polls are presented in this article, the long term trend in public opinion has been against the use of nuclear energy. The biggest shifts in public opinion on nuclear energy issues coincide with major nuclear accidents. However, these large changes in public opinion are likely to be temporary.

Indebtedness is expressed to the following research organizations for their permission to publish results of surveys conducted by them:

CBS/NYT—CBS News/*New York Times* Poll, New York
CIPO—Canadian Institute for Public Opinion, Toronto
Demoskopie—Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach, Allensbach, West Germany
EMNID—EMNID-Institut GmbH & Co., Bielefeld, West Germany
Eurodim—Eurodim, Athens, Greece
Gallup—Gallup Organization, Princeton
Harris—Louis Harris and Associates, Orlando
MORI—Market & Opinion Research International, London
NIPO—Netherlands Institute of Public Opinion, Amsterdam
NOP—NOP Market Research Ltd., London
NOS—Nederlandse Omroep Stichting, Hilversum, Netherlands
SCP—Sociocultural Planning Bureau, Rijswijk, Netherlands
SOC—Social Surveys (Gallup Poll) Ltd., London

The dates given with the tables refer to the date the survey was carried out. The results are based on nationwide representative samples of adults. The definition of "adults" is not the same in all countries or for all research organizations. The tables indicate which age group was questioned in the survey (e.g., 16+ or 18+). When this indication is missing, the original publication only mentioned a sample of adults. The respondents were questioned either in person at their homes or by telephone (indicated by "tel."). When the size of the sample was specified in the original publication, this information is reproduced.

Questions about the data and requests for additional information should be addressed to C. de Boer, The Polls Archives, Oude Hoogstraat 24, 1012 CE Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Saliency of Nuclear Accidents

Great Britain—SOC/BBC TV: Have you heard or read about the recent accident in the Russian nuclear power station?
USA—CBS/NYT: Have you heard or read anything about the accident at the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania?

	Yes	*No*	*No Opinion*	
USA, 5–7 Apr 1979, Three Mile Island (tel.)	96	3	1	*N* = 1158
Great Britain, 2–3 May 1986, Chernobyl	99	1	—	*N* = 489

West Germany—Demoskopie: A few days ago there was a serious accident in an atomic plant in America. Did you follow the reports about it closely, or did it not especially interest you?

	Followed It Closely	*Didn't Especially Interest Me*	*Didn't Hear About It*	
Apr 1979 (16+)	82	18	—	*N* = 588

Safety of Nuclear Power Plants

USA—Harris: Now let me ask you about some things that some people have said are problems associated with nuclear power being used as a source of energy for electric power. Do you think [*read each item*] is a major problem connected with nuclear power plants, a minor problem, or hardly a problem at all? (tel., 18+)
The escape of radioactivity into the atmosphere

	Major Problem	*Minor Problem*	*Hardly a Problem*	*Not Sure*
Feb 1983	46	30	18	6
Apr 1979	62	26	8	4
Nov 1976	57	17	14	12
May 1975	47	28	13	12

USA—Harris: Now I am going to read some statements about nuclear power plants. For each, would you tell me if you feel it is completely true, partly true, partly untrue, or completely untrue. (tel., 18+)
A major radiation leakage from a nuclear power plant can cause fallout that can kill large numbers of people.

	True	*Untrue*	*Not Sure*	
Apr 1979	84	9	7	*N* = 1510
1978	61	16	16	

Great Britain—SOC: From what you have read or heard, how safe do you think nuclear power stations are?

	Very Safe	*Fairly Safe*	*Not Very Safe*	*Dangerous (vol.)*	*Don't Know*
Dec 1987	14	45	34	4	3
Mar 1987	18	46	28	5	3

	Very Safe	*Fairly Safe*	*Not Very Safe*	*Dangerous (vol.)*	*Don't Know*
Feb 1987	12	47	33	4	4
Nov 1986	14	47	30	6	4
June 1986	11	41	39	5	3
May 1986	9	35	41	10	4
Jan 1986	17	47	25	5	6
Mar 1985	16	45	28	6	6
Oct 1984	15	46	26	6	7
Jan 1984	14	49	27	6	3
Apr 1983	18	44	26	5	7
Jan 1980	13	51	22	7	8

Great Britain—NOP: There has been much discussion in the news recently about the nuclear waste reprocessing plant at Sellafield in Cumbria. The plant has been criticised for its number of leaks of radio-active matter, but the government claims that the leaks are not significant and that the plant is safe. Do you personally think Sellafield is safe enough or not?

	Safe	*Not Safe*	
21–22 Mar 1986 (15+)	17	69	*N* = 1019
Men	23	65	
Women	12	71	

Great Britain—SOC/BBC TV: Are you optimistic or pessimistic about our ability to dispose of waste from nuclear power plants in an acceptable way?

	Optimistic	*Pessimistic*	*Don't Know*
Nov 1986	25	61	14
June 1985	30	59	11

Greece—Eurodim: A few years ago, DEI [the Public Power Company], to face the high prices and the shortage of oil, had decided to build nuclear plants for the production of electric energy. Nevertheless, some are afraid that the nuclear plants are dangerous. Do you think that they are:

	Not dangerous and should be built	*Dangerous but should be built*	*Dangerous and should not be built*	*Don't know*	
May 1986*	3	24	73	0	*N* = 700
May 1981*	6	34	56	4	*N* = 600

* Surveys held in the Greater Athens area, where 35% of the total Greek population live. Nationwide surveys have shown that the capital's population is 5–7% more left-wing than the total Greek population.

Great Britain—SOC/BBC TV; USA—Gallup/Newsweek: Are you optimistic or pessimistic about our ability to run nuclear generating plants without serious accidents?

	Great Britain			*USA (tel.)*			
	Optimistic	*Pessimistic*	*Don't Know*	*Optimistic*	*Pessimistic*	*Don't Know*	
Nov 1986	42	45	13				
30 Apr–1 May 1986				50	39	11	*N* = 762
June 1985	47	41	12	55	35	10	

USA—Harris: All in all, from what you have heard or read, how safe are nuclear power plants that produce electric power . . . very safe, somewhat safe, or not so safe? (tel., 18+)

	Safe	*Not Safe*	*Not Sure*
6–9 Apr 1979	67	30	3
1978	64	28	8
1977	65	23	12
1975	64	18	18

Nuclear Power Plants in the Area

Great Britain—SOC: What would you do if a nuclear power station were to be built in your area?

	Agree	*Not Oppose, but Anxious*	*Oppose*	*No Feelings*	*Don't Know*
Dec 1987	11	23	59	4	3
Mar 1987	13	26	50	8	2
Feb 1987	10	28	50	9	3
Nov 1986	12	26	51	8	3
June 1986	9	23	59	7	1
May 1986	9	17	64	6	4
Jan 1986	15	27	45	9	4
Feb 1985	15	25	48	9	3
Oct 1984	14	27	44	11	5
Jan 1984	15	28	44	10	3
Apr 1983	14	27	42	13	3
Jan 1980	17	29	37	10	7
Oct 1979	16	27	42	10	6
Sep 1979	16	24	42	11	6
July 1979	17	28	42	8	6
May 1976	19	25	34	12	10

Canada—CIPO: What would you do if a nuclear power station were to be built in your area—would you agree to its being built, would you not oppose it although you would feel anxious about it, or would you oppose it? (18+)

	Agree	*Not Oppose, but Anxious*	*Oppose*	*Don't Know*	
5–7 June 1986	8	17	71	4	*N* = 1022
1983	14	22	59	5	
1976	28	23	35	14	

USA—Gallup/Newsweek: Would you be against the construction of a nuclear power plant in this area, within five miles of where you live? (tel.)

	Against Plant	*Not Against*	*No Opinion*	
30 Apr–1 May 1986	70	26	4	*N* = 762
Apr 1979	60	33	7	
June 1976	45	42	13	

USA—CBS/NYT: Would you approve or disapprove if the nuclear power plants for generating electricity are built in your community? (tel.)

	Approve	*Disapprove*	*No Opinion*	
30 Apr–1 May 1986	25	70	5	*N* = 695
5–7 Apr 1979	38	56	6	*N* = 1158
July 1977	55	33	12	

The Nuclear Energy Issue

Netherlands—NIPO/SCP: What do you think: should the Dutch nuclear power stations be closed down soon, or should they continue operating? (18+)

	Quickly Closed Down	*Continue Operating*	*No Opinion*	
7–8 Feb 1983	50	42	8	*N* = 1015
Nov 1981	44	44	12	

Netherlands—NOS: Are you for or against large-scale use of nuclear energy for generating electric power? (tel., 18+)

	For	*Against*	*Depends*	*Don't Know*	
21–22 Sep 1979	24	52	10	13	*N* = 521
12 Apr 1977	27	38	16	19	*N* = 379

Great Britain—SOC: At present, about 20 percent* of the total electricity in Great Britain comes from nuclear power. What do you think should be the development of nuclear power generation in this country?

	Increase Nuclear Power Generation	*Not Develop Anymore*	*Stop Generating Nuclear Power*	*Don't Know*
Mar 1987	31	39	22	8
Feb 1987	27	42	24	7
Nov 1986	25	42	26	7
June 1986	19	41	33	7
May 1986	18	39	36	8
Jan 1986	33	31	22	13
Feb 1985	34	33	20	12
Oct 1984	35	33	21	11
Jan 1984	32	34	22	12
Apr 1983	30	36	19	15
Jan 1980	41	28	18	14
Oct 1979	42	26	16	16
Sep 1979	45	21	17	17
July 1979	47	25	14	14
May 1976	39	21	15	25

* 10% in the questions of 1976–1985, 12% in 1986.

Great Britain—MORI/Reader's Digest: Which of these statements comes nearest to what you think? (9–13 Jan 1987, 15+, N = 886)

I am *well informed* about nuclear energy and *support* the further construction of nuclear power stations in Germany/Britain.	12
I am *not very well informed* about nuclear energy and *support* the further construction of nuclear power stations in Germany/Britain.	26
I am *well informed* about nuclear energy and *oppose* the further construction of nuclear power stations in Germany/Britain.	17
I am *not very well informed* about nuclear energy and *oppose* the further construction of nuclear power stations in Germany/Britain.	37
No opinion	8

West Germany—EMNID/Der Spiegel: On the subject of nuclear energy, some say that we must build nuclear power stations in the years to come if we are to preserve our prosperity. Others say that the risks are too great, also that no further nuclear power stations should be built. Which view do you agree with? (tel., 14+)

	Favor Building	*Against Building*
Aug 1986	18	80
June 1986	18	82
6–8 May 1986	29	69
Mar 1982	52	46
Oct 1981	52	46
Apr 1980	56	42

West Germany—EMNID: Are you in favor of the principle of building nuclear power stations, do you tend to oppose it, or does it not really matter to you whether further nuclear power stations are built or not? (14+)

	In Favor	*Against*	*Don't Care*	
16 Mar–1 Apr 1985	30	43	26	N = 1018
1983	34	42	22	
Feb 1981	41	31	28	N = 1016
June 1979	30	38	31	N = 1001
1974	44	19	36	

USA—CBS/NYT: Would you approve or disapprove of building more nuclear power plants to generate electricity? (tel.)

	Approve	*Disapprove*	*No Opinion*	
30 Apr–1 May 1986	34	59	7	N = 695
June 1985	40	44	16	
Apr 1979	46	41	13	N = 1158
July 1977	69	21	10	

USA—Harris: In general, do you favor or oppose the building of more nuclear power plants in the United States? (tel., 18+)

	Favor	*Oppose*	*Not Sure*
Feb 1983	37	51	12
Nov 1980	47	47	6
May 1979	52	42	6
Apr 1979	47	45	8

	Favor	*Oppose*	*Not Sure*
Oct 1978	57	31	12
Mar 1978	55	25	20
July 1976	61	22	17
Mar 1975	63	19	18

Canada—CIPO: At present very little of the total electricity used in Canada comes from nuclear power generation, what do you think should happen? (18+)

	Nuclear Power Generation Should				
	Increase	*Not Develop More*	*Stop*	*Don't Know*	
5–7 June 1986	13	37	40	11	*N* = 1022
1983	23	36	24	17	
1982	20	35	31	14	
1981	31	27	23	19	
1980	30	27	27	16	
1979	23	34	29	14	
1978	35	29	15	21	
1976	41	20	14	25	

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Fall 1988

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THE EFFECTS OF THE RACE OF THE INTERVIEWER ON RACE-RELATED ATTITUDES OF BLACK RESPONDENTS IN SRC/CPS NATIONAL ELECTION STUDIES

BARBARA A. ANDERSON
BRIAN D. SILVER AND
PAUL R. ABRAMSON

Abstract Previous research found substantial effects of the race of the interviewer on measures of civic attitudes and electoral participation of blacks in NES surveys from 1964, 1976, 1978, 1980, and 1984. This study extends the previous analysis in two ways: it uses data from two additional NES surveys, 1982 and 1986; and it focuses on the effects of the race of the interviewer on race-related attitudes. Blacks interviewed by whites were much more likely to express warmth and closeness toward whites than were blacks interviewed by blacks. But whereas there is no race-of-interviewer effect on blacks' expressions of warmth toward blacks, there is a clear race-of-interviewer effect on blacks' expressions of closeness toward blacks. The pattern of responses to the closeness items appears to result from the format of the question. The observed trend of decreasing expressed closeness of blacks toward blacks in NES surveys between 1976 and 1984 is an artifact of changes in the racial composition of the interviewer staff.

BARBARA A. ANDERSON is Professor of Sociology at the University of Michigan. BRIAN D. SILVER is Professor and Chair of the Department of Political Science at Michigan State University. PAUL R. ABRAMSON is Professor of Political Science at Michigan State University. An earlier version of this article was presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, Illinois, 2–6 September 1987. The authors would like to thank Mike Coble and Harriet Dhanak for programming assistance; John Siebs and Maria Sanchez for managing the production of the interviewer data; Cynthia Buckley, Ellen Gordon, and Victoria Velkoff for research assistance; and Reynolds Farley and Howard Schuman for helpful advice. Data from the SRC/CPS National Election Studies were obtained through the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research. Interviewer data were obtained from the Survey Research Center of the University of Michigan. The authors paid for the SRC's services from research funds provided by the Population Studies Center of the University of Michigan. None of these individuals or organizations bears any responsibility for the analyses or conclusions.

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Race-of-interviewer effects appear on some policy questions (support for civil rights leaders, government spending on programs to support blacks) but not on others (school busing, government aid to minorities). Survey analysts need to test carefully for race-of-interviewer effects on items measuring attitudes in a given survey, when tracing trends in attitudes over time, and when evaluating alternative formulations of questions on race-related attitudes.

Few users of the data collected by major academic survey research organizations consider error or variability that might be introduced by the data production process. But however well theoretical concepts are defined, survey questions are formulated, and data are analyzed, the data are the product of an *interview*. The interview involves an interaction between interviewer and respondent in which the stimulus to the respondent is not just the "question" as it is written in the survey booklet but also the social context in which the question is asked.

Sudman and Bradburn (1974) identify three principal sources of variation in survey data quality: (1) the characteristics of the task (the form and content of the survey questions and the methods of asking them), (2) respondent characteristics, and (3) the interviewers' performance. This research focuses on one aspect of the third source of variation: the effect of the race of the interviewer. We examine the relation between the race of the interviewer and expressed attitudes by blacks on race-related issues. The data are from the National Election Study (NES) surveys conducted by the Survey Research Center (SRC) and the Center for Political Studies (CPS) of the University of Michigan for 1964, 1976, 1978, 1980, 1982, 1984, and 1986.

The scholarly literature concerning race-of-interviewer effects is small (for a succinct summary, see Schuman and Kalton, 1985). Previous research not based on NES surveys has shown that whether or not the respondent and the interviewer are of the same race does not always affect responses, even on race-related items; but the types of question for which the race of the interviewer is likely to have a substantial effect are those dealing with expressions of hostility or closeness toward members of different racial groups (Schuman and Converse, 1971; Schuman and Hatchett, 1974). Even so, studies of group consciousness or identity using NES data (e.g., Miller et al., 1981; Conover, 1984) have not considered the possible effect of the race of the interviewer. We shall show that for some measures of group identity and antipathy in NES surveys, the race of the interviewer by itself accounts for more of the variance in the responses of blacks than do the effects of the respondents' education, age, sex, and place of residence taken together.

Perhaps the main reason for the disregard of interviewer characteristics in NES surveys is that no information on the characteristics of interviewers has been included in the data sets distributed by the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) for surveys from 1948 to 1984. The ICPSR provides limited information for the 1986 survey.[1]

For a previous study (Anderson, Silver, and Abramson, 1988), we obtained data directly from the SRC on the race of the interviewers for five NES surveys: 1964, 1976, 1978, 1980, and 1984.[2] We found sharp changes in the racial composition of the interviewer staff in NES surveys. We also found that the race of the interviewer had a strong effect on political attitudes and reported levels of electoral involvement and participation of black respondents in presidential election years. When interviewed by a black in the preelection survey, black respondents were more likely to express interest in elections, concern about which party won the election, and a strong sense of citizen duty. Black respondents were also much more likely *actually* to vote if they were interviewed by a black in the preelection survey than if they were interviewed by a white. Also, black nonvoters who were interviewed by a black in the postelection survey were more likely to report (falsely) that they voted than were blacks who were interviewed by whites.

Some of these effects of the race of the interviewer appear to be response effects and some involve change in actual postinterview behavior (e.g., in voter turnout). These results call into question the conventional wisdom that holds that one is more likely to obtain valid survey responses when the race of the interviewer is matched to that of the respondent (Backstrom and Hursh-César, 1981; Schuman and Kalton, 1985). They also illustrate that the race of the interviewer can affect attitudes and behaviors that are not explicitly race-related.

---

[1] Unfortunately, the information provided is potentially misleading because the racial categories used to designate interviewers in the 1986 NES are "white" and "nonwhite." More detailed information that we obtained directly from the Survey Research Center reveals that 18 of the 94 blacks who were interviewed by nonwhites were not interviewed by blacks, but instead by a member of another nonwhite racial group. To make our results comparable with the analyses in the previous six surveys, we have excluded these 18 blacks from the analysis.

[2] These surveys were chosen because in each of those years the SRC conducted a vote validation study in which local registration and voting records were checked to determine whether the survey respondents actually were registered and had voted. Comparison of the respondent's self-report with the vote validation information provides a check on the accuracy of the self-reports and permits an analysis of the relation between respondent characteristics, interviewer characteristics, and the accuracy of the vote self-report. The 1986 NES survey results also contain a vote validation study.

Race of the Interviewer and Race-Related Attitudes

This study extends our previous analysis (Anderson, Silver, and Abramson, 1988) in two ways. First, it employs data on the race of the interviewer in two additional NES surveys, 1982 and 1986.[3] Second, rather than focusing on general attitudes toward the political system and upon electoral participation, it focuses on race-related attitudes: toward racial groups, toward government policies that affect minorities, and toward civil rights leaders. In particular, we investigate the effects of the race of the interviewer on two measures of group affinity or hostility: "feeling thermometers" that are designed to gauge the respondent's affect toward specific groups; and measures of the "closeness" of the respondent to specific groups that are supposed to gauge the respondents' perception of the similarity between themselves and members of these groups.

Based on previous research (Schuman and Converse, 1971; Schuman and Hatchett, 1974), we expect to find a substantial effect of the race of the interviewer on responses to both the feeling thermometer and the closeness measure toward whites. The main reason for this, as stated by Schuman and Converse (1971), is that black respondents who are interviewed by whites will be reluctant to express negative attitudes toward whites out of the desire not to offend this "polite stranger" who has come into their household; in contrast, blacks interviewed by blacks will be more candid in expressing any negative feelings toward whites, since expression of such attitudes would not be offensive to a black interviewer.

Even if we were to find that blacks are less positive toward whites or more positive toward blacks when interviewed by a black than when interviewed by a white, this would not mean that the responses given to black interviewers are more valid or more truthful. Schuman and Converse (1971) also noted that black responses to black interviewers might be distorted. Any difference in the responses given to black interviewers and white interviewers is only a *difference* and does not by itself prove that the answers given to blacks or to whites are more valid.

---

[3] The article by Anderson, Silver, and Abramson (1988) was first presented as a paper at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association in September 1986. The information about interviewer characteristics for studies prior to 1978 was not in machine-readable form. Thus, acquisition of this information required original coding from personnel files and interview booklets. For the 1964 NES we were not able to obtain interviewer data for those postelection interviewers for whom no identification number was given in the data files. These are all cases in which the postelection interviewer was a different person from the preelection interviewer—about 5% of the cases.

Based on previous research (Schuman and Converse, 1971; Schuman and Hatchett, 1974), we expect to find a smaller effect of the race of the interviewer on answers to questions about government policies and programs than to questions about racial groups. Support for government programs, such as school busing and aid to minority groups, may involve a multidimensional evaluation of the pros and cons of a given policy, the effects of which do not all benefit a particular ethnic or racial group. For example, the perceived desirability of using school busing may involve evaluation of the importance of having children in schools close to their homes, of the consequences of having children placed into schools where they may not be welcome, of the qualities of the particular schools to which children are to be bused, and of the desirability of racial integration in general.

In addition, we investigate the effects of the race of the interviewer on black respondents' statements about whether civil rights leaders have been pushing too fast or too slowly. We expect to find some effect of the race of the interviewer on responses to this question, with blacks being more willing to criticize civil rights leaders for pushing too slowly when they are interviewed by blacks than when they are interviewed by whites.

It is important to emphasize again that although one can observe differences in survey responses depending on the race of the interviewer, one cannot be certain whether the responses given to white interviewers or to black interviewers are more accurate. As Turner and Martin (1981:2) have observed, "Subjective phenomena are those that, in principle, can be directly known, if at all, only by the [respondents] themselves." In a similar vein, Sudman and Bradburn (1974:7) have stated:

> For attitudinal reports, we can speak only loosely about accuracy, and indeed, it would be better if we eliminated the term altogether. We can speak of the variability of the responses obtained by different methods or by the same method at different points in time. We can talk about the consistency of responses to different questions that are designed to measure the same attitude, or among related attitudes that we believe have some consistent logical relationship. But we cannot speak about accuracy in the strict sense without some external criterion to which everyone is willing to compare the response.

One can, however, investigate the sensitivity of subjective responses to the conditions of the interview, including the race of the interviewer. Even if one cannot prove that the answers under a given interview condition are more *accurate*, one can still show that the overall pattern of responses would have been *different* if the racial composition of the interviewer staff had differed, and therefore that the race of the interviewer should be taken into account in the survey design and analysis.

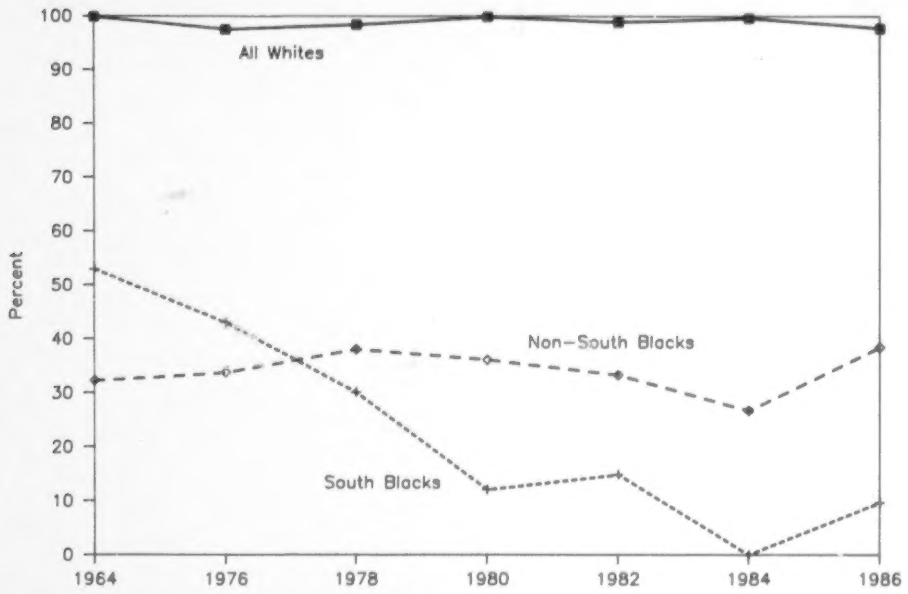

Figure 1. Percent of Respondents Interviewed by Interviewers of Own Race in NES Postelection Surveys

Race of the Interviewer in NES Surveys

Figure 1 shows the percent of all white respondents who were interviewed by whites and the percent of black respondents in the South and non-South who were interviewed by blacks in the seven NES postelection surveys for which we now have data.[4] In all surveys, almost all white respondents have been interviewed by whites. Thus, although responses by whites may be affected by the race of the interviewer, it is not possible to study race-of-interviewer effects for white respondents using the available data.

In all surveys, less than a majority of blacks have been interviewed by blacks (see also Table A2 in the Appendix). The proportion of blacks interviewed by blacks declined markedly between 1964 and 1984 in the South, and then increased modestly between 1984 and 1986. Outside the South, the proportion of blacks who were interviewed by blacks changed very little. The declining proportion of blacks who were interviewed by blacks means that any trends in black racial attitudes could be partly an artifact of change in the racial composition of the interviewer staff if, in fact, the race of the interviewer is correlated with the survey responses.

---

[4] "South" includes states classified as "Solid South" in ICPSR codebooks: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia. These include all states of the old Confederacy except Tennessee. We use the terms "non-South" and "North" interchangeably in this article.

Analysis of the Effect of the Race of the Interviewer on Race-Related Attitudes

We examine the answers given by black respondents to a variety of survey items that we thought might be sensitive on a priori grounds to the race of the interviewer. Thus, we are not searching for race-of-interviewer effects on all possible items. The analysis emphasizes questions that have appeared in more than one NES survey for two reasons.[5] First, such an emphasis allows us to examine some of the implications of changes in the racial composition of the interviewer staff over time. In addition to summarizing the trends for each item, we show what the trends would have been if the racial composition of the interviewer staff across surveys had remained unchanged since 1964. Second, what might appear to be a race-of-interviewer effect in a given survey could be a result of respondent characteristics or other factors, including random error owing to the small number of black respondents for each survey. Therefore, we pool the responses to a given attitudinal item from all the surveys in which the item was asked in order have a larger number of cases to conduct multivariate analyses.[6]

Although they did not examine the racial composition of the interviewer staffs for the surveys that they analyzed, Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo (1985:153) raised the possibility that the reported increasing conservatism of blacks between the 1950s and 1980s might be an artifact of the increasing proportion of blacks who were interviewed by whites. We shall show that change in the racial composition of the interviewer staff did in fact contribute to the reported change in some race-related attitudes of blacks in NES surveys, and that the aggregate levels (means and percentage distributions) in the responses often differed greatly according to the race of the interviewer. But not all such attitude measures were affected by the race of the interviewer, and even when the race of the interviewer made a difference, the direction of change in the attitudes from one survey to the next was usually the same whether the interviewer was black or white.

---

[5] Appendix Table A1 shows the NES surveys in which given items were included and whether the item was asked in the preelection or the postelection interview.

[6] The pooled data set includes all black respondents from all seven of the NES surveys for whom we have race-of-interviewer data and for whom the interviewer was either a black or a white. The total number of cases in the pooled data set is 1,389. We do not weight the cases. Pooling of the cases has several benefits: (1) the larger *N* facilitates multivariate analysis; (2) the chance that any observed interviewer effects are the result of only a few interviewers is reduced; (3) the chance that observed effects in a single survey are due to just a few primary sampling units is reduced; and (4) the significance of differences between surveys (period effects) can be tested for directly.

INTERGROUP ATTITUDES

Feeling thermometers. Table 1 shows the mean warmth of black respondents toward blacks and toward whites on a feeling thermometer scale running from 0 (coldest possible) to 100 (warmest possible). The wording of the items is given in notes to the table. Figures 2a and 2b graph the average temperature on the feeling thermometers. The mean values across the surveys for all black respondents are joined by the solid line. The two dashed lines trace the mean values according to whether the respondent was interviewed by a white interviewer or a black interviewer. As shown in Figure 2a, at all dates, black respondents who were interviewed by a white expressed much warmer feelings toward whites than did black respondents who were interviewed by a black.

What would the trend in the overall mean temperature toward whites have been had the racial composition of the interviewer staff in NES surveys remained unchanged after 1964? One answer to this question is shown in Figure 2a. The dotted line shows what the trend in the overall average temperature toward whites would have been if the proportion of blacks who were interviewed by whites and by blacks had remained unchanged after 1964, but if the responses to interviewers of a given race at each date were the same as those actually reported for the given survey. Thus, the dotted line represents a synthetic calculation, a weighted average of the two dashed lines, with the weights being the proportion of interviewers of each race in 1964.[7]

If the racial composition of the interviewer staff had not changed after 1964, the overall trends would be the same as the reported trends. The average temperature toward whites would have risen from 1964 through 1980, dipped in 1982, and then risen between 1982 and 1984. However, in 1980, 1982, and 1984 the temperature toward whites

---

[7] We shall show similar synthetic calculations for other attitude items. If the item was asked in the 1964 NES, the racial (black–white) distribution of the interviewers used for the synthetic calculation is based on the racial distribution of the interviewers for those respondents who answered the item in 1964. If the item was not asked in the 1964 NES, the racial distribution of the interviewers used for the synthetic calculation is based on the racial (black–white) distribution of all interviewers of all black respondents in the 1964 preelection survey (see Table A2).

These synthetic calculations are only an approximation. One reason for this is that we adjust only for the overall proportion of the interviewers (of black respondents) who were black or white, not for changes in the regional distribution of the interviewers or for other interviewer characteristics.

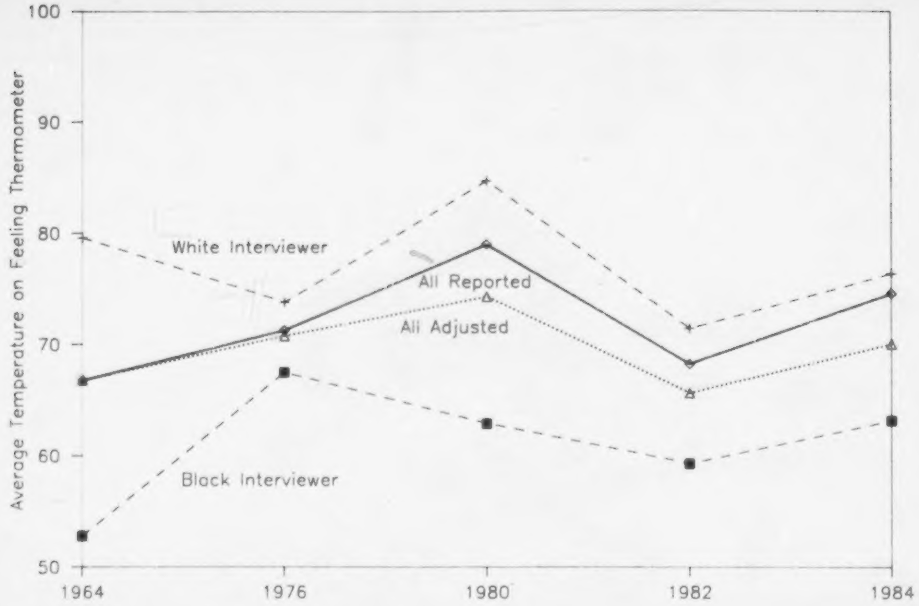

Figure 2a. Average Temperature on Feeling Thermometer of Blacks Toward Whites, as Reported for All Blacks and by Race of Interviewer, and as Adjusted to Reflect Distribution of Interviewers by Race in 1964

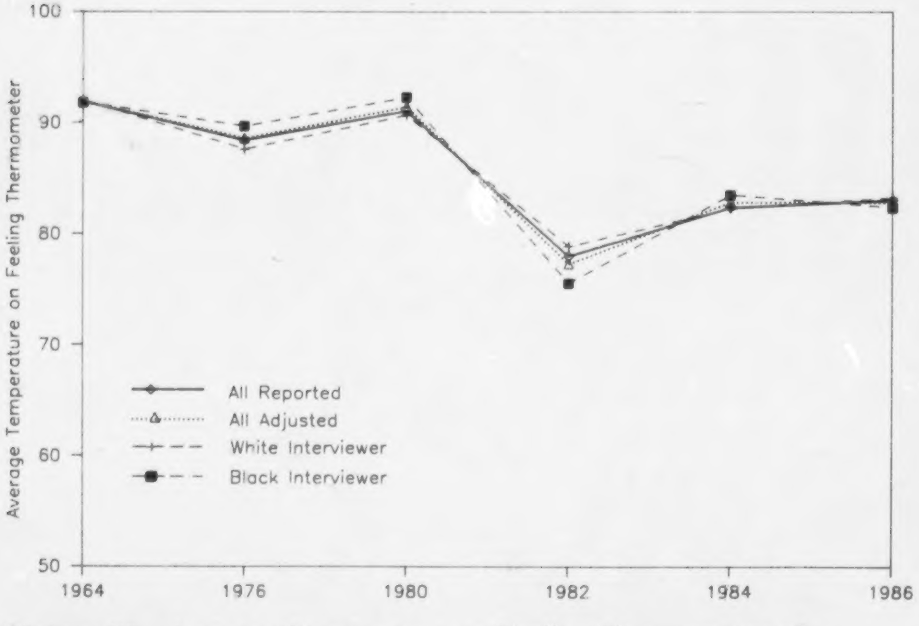

Figure 2b. Average Temperature on Feeling Thermometer of Blacks Toward Blacks, as Reported for All Blacks and by Race of Interviewer, and as Adjusted to Reflect Distribution of Interviewers by Race in 1964

Table 1. Mean Rating of Whites and Blacks on Feeling Thermometer for Black Respondents, by Race of Interviewer, 1964, 1976, 1980, 1982, 1984, 1986

Race of Inter- viewer	1964[a]		1976[b]		1980		1982		1984[c]		1986	
	Mean	Base *N*	Mean	Base *N*	Mean	Base *N*	Mean	Base *N*	Mean	Base *N*	Mean	Base *N*
							Whites Rated					
Black	52.8	74	67.5	65	62.9	39	59.3	36	63.2	11	—	—[d]
White	79.6	81	73.8	100	84.7	109	71.4	102	76.4	74		
Signif.	**		*		**		**		**			
Either	66.8	155	71.3	165	79.0	148	68.2	138	74.6	85	—	—
							Blacks Rated					
Black	91.8	74	89.7	67	92.3	42	75.6	36	83.5	10	82.4	70
White	92.0	81	87.6	102	90.7	110	78.9	105	82.3	75	83.3	223

Signif. Either	91.9	155	88.4	169	91.1	152	78.0	141	82.4	85	83.1	293

NOTES: The interviewer data in this and later tables pertain to the pre- or postelection survey corresponding to whether the item was asked in the pre- or postelection survey for the given year. The question asked (taken from 1976 survey):

We'd also like to get your feelings about some groups in American society. When I read the name of a group, we'd like you to rate it with what we call a feeling thermometer. Ratings between 50 and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorably and warm toward the group; ratings between 0 and 50 degrees mean that you don't feel favorably towards the group and that you don't care too much for that group. If you don't feel particularly warm or cold toward a group you would rate them at 50 degrees. If we come to a group you don't know much about, just tell me and we'll move on to the next one.

In 1964 and 1976, scores reported as 97 (the highest code reported on the thermometer items, to indicate the warmest rating) were recoded to 100.

Answers coded as DK, Can't Judge, or NA are treated as missing.

[a] The data for 1964 exclude cases in the "Negro Supplement."

[b] Although a weighting factor is usually employed with the 1976 survey, we use the unweighted results in this and subsequent tables.

[c] The postelection data for 1984 in this and later tables exclude cases in which the interviews were conducted by telephone.

[d] The feeling thermometer rating of whites was not included in the 1986 NES survey.

* Difference of means significant at $p = .10$ using a 2-tailed test.

** Difference of means significant at $p = .05$ using a 2-tailed test.

would have been lower than the observed temperature. For example, if the racial composition of the interviewer staff in 1984 had been the same as in 1964, the average temperature toward whites would have been 70 rather than 75.

The picture for warmth of feelings toward blacks, shown in Figure 2b, is very different. The responses given to white interviewers differed little from responses given to black interviewers. As a result, an adjustment for the change in the racial composition of the interviewer staff has a trivial and inconsistent effect on the reported average temperature toward blacks. Thus, Figures 2a and 2b show that although the race of the interviewer appears to have a substantial effect on stated warmth toward whites for black respondents, black respondents are willing to tell both black and white interviewers that they feel quite warm toward other blacks.

The differences in the responses given to white interviewers and black interviewers could be the result in any given survey of a small sample size or of differences in respondent characteristics, such as education, age, or place of residence. In addition, the assignment of interviewers by race is not random. Black interviewers are assigned to areas where most respondents are expected to be black. Previous analyses have demonstrated that blacks who were interviewed by blacks in NES surveys were more likely to reside in the central cities of northern SMSAs or in the South—where the neighborhoods in which the respondents resided were "mostly black" or "all black" (Anderson, Silver, and Abramson, 1988). In addition, blacks who were interviewed by blacks tended to have lower levels of formal education than blacks who were interviewed by whites. Hence, any apparent race-of-interviewer effects on racial attitudes are potentially an artifact of respondent characteristics.

To address the questions of sample size and of the effects of respondent characteristics, we performed OLS (ordinary least-squares) regression analyses for each of the feeling thermometers. For this purpose, we pooled the cases of black respondents from the seven NES surveys for which we had data on the race of the interviewer. Our goal is to determine whether the bivariate relations between the race of the interviewer and the responses to the feeling thermometer persist even after controls for respondent characteristics are introduced.[8]

The results are shown in Table 2. The regression estimates in which warmth of feeling toward whites is the dependent variable are presented in Equations 1 and 2, and the estimates in which warmth of feeling toward blacks is the dependent variable are given in Equations 3 and 4. The first equation for each dependent variable contains as independent variables only a set of control variables representing respondent characteristics; the second equation adds a race-of-interviewer dummy variable (1 if the interviewer was black, 0 if white). We chose as control variables a set of respondent characteristics that we expected to account for a large amount of the variance in the dependent variable; these were dummy variables representing the survey date and the respondent's education, age, sex, and region.[9]

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[8] Because of the small number of cases involved, it is also possible that any apparent effects of the race of the interviewer in a given survey are actually the effects of *particular*, individual interviewers. However, as shown in Table A2, many interviewers of both races are involved, and pooling the cases further reduces the possibility that a few interviewers are responsible for the effects observed in a given survey.

Our multivariate tests for the effects of the race of the interviewer are conservative, both because we included a large set of control variables and because we added the race-of-interviewer variable last. This approach is not designed to obtain the best possible explanation for each dependent variable. Rather, we wanted to determine whether the race-of-interviewer effects shown in our cross-tabulations were an artifact of respondent characteristics. For example, it was important to take into account variables, such as place of residence and education, that were related to whether the respondent was interviewed by a black.

We included a larger set of control variables than we would have if our aim had been to obtain the most parsimonious explanation of the socioeconomic and ecological factors that lead to variation in responses to these attitudinal items. Thus, the control variables that are in the equation could serve as surrogates for variables that are not included. Even if the control variables that were in the equation accounted for only a small proportion of the variance in the dependent variable, it is unlikely that a plausible alternative set of control variables would account for substantially more variance.

Although the size and the statistical significance of the coefficient for the race-of-interviewer variable are unaffected by the order in which it is entered in the equation, entering it last produces a conservative assessment of the magnitude of the effect of the race of the interviewer on the proportion of the variance explained in the dependent variable. Entering the race-of-interviewer variable last attributes any of the vari-

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[9] The regression coefficients for the dummy variables for the individual NES surveys can be interpreted in two ways. First, they represent the effects of unmeasured differences in the contexts in which the questionnaire items were asked in different surveys or in the methods used in the survey administration. Second, the coefficients can be interpreted as the mean difference in the responses between the given NES survey and the referent survey (the omitted category), net of the effects of the other variables that are explicitly controlled for in the equation. Thus, the coefficients for the NES variables could be used to measure the trend (or period effect) in the overall responses between surveys, net of differences due to the race of the interviewer and to the respondents' education, age, region, and sex.

Table 2. Regressions of Feeling Thermometers Toward Whites and Blacks on Characteristics of Black Respondents and Race of the Interviewer

Dummy Independent Variable	Dependent Variable							
	Feeling Toward Whites				Feeling Toward Blacks			
	Equation 1		Equation 2		Equation 3		Equation 4	
	b	*t*-ratio	*b*	*t*-ratio	*b*	*t*-ratio	*b*	*t*-ratio
Constant	57.5**	16.799	63.7**	19.031	89.0**	37.033	88.7**	35.931
Survey[a]								
1976 NES	2.9	1.162	1.8	.758	−4.2**	−2.086	−4.1**	−2.065
1980 NES	12.7**	5.026	9.1**	3.798	−.5	−.265	−.4	−.194
1982 NES	.5	.196	−2.8	−1.156	−14.1**	−6.774	−14.0**	−6.655
1984 NES	6.5**	2.131	1.3	.457	−10.1**	−4.123	−9.9**	−3.982
1986 NES					−8.8**	−4.831	−8.7**	−4.704
Education[b]								
College graduate	3.3	.920	1.3	.379	.5	.227	.6	.270
Some college	1.8	.679	1.2	.498	−.1	−.032	.0	−.014
High sch. grad.	2.5	1.160	2.1	1.030	−.4	−.280	−.4	−.283

Sex								
Male	−1.2	−.710	−1.5	−.900	−2.3*	−1.978	−2.3*	−1.980
Age[c]								
31–40	5.8**	2.430	6.2**	2.777	2.9*	1.818	2.9*	1.813
41–50	7.1**	2.595	8.5**	3.308	1.9	1.038	1.9	1.017
51–60	10.5**	3.869	12.1**	4.716	2.5	1.345	2.5	1.312
61–70	13.4**	4.376	14.7**	5.156	2.1	1.030	2.1	1.013
Over 70	12.2**	3.445	14.6**	4.398	3.3	1.416	3.2	1.384
Region[d]								
South	6.7**	2.464	7.1**	2.772	4.2**	2.391	4.2**	2.416
North—Cent. city	−1.8	−.654	1.0	.388	.7	.370	.6	.330
Interviewer race								
Black			−17.0**	−9.839			.7	.511
Adjusted R^2	.094		.207		.077		.077	
N	687		687		986		986	

NOTES: Data on the feeling thermometer toward whites are based on pooled cases from the NES surveys of 1964, 1976, 1980, 1982, and 1984. Data on the feeling thermometer toward blacks are based on these years plus 1986.

[a] The omitted category is the 1964 NES.

[b] The omitted category is less than completed high school education.

[c] The omitted category is age 18–30.

[d] The omitted category is respondents who resided in the North but outside of a central city of a metropolitan area.

* Coefficient significant at $p = .10$ using a 2-tailed test.

** Coefficient significant at $p = .05$ using a 2-tailed test.

ance that is explained in common by the race-of-interviewer variable and the control variables to the control variables.[10]

Equations 1 and 2 in Table 2 demonstrate that the large differences in feelings toward whites associated with the race of the interviewer shown in Figure 2a persist even when the effects of the control variables are taken into account. The adjusted R^2 increases from .094 with only the control variables in the equation to .207 after the race-of-interviewer variable is included. Net of the effects of the control variables, when blacks are interviewed by other blacks their average temperature on the feeling thermometer toward whites is 17 degrees cooler than it is when blacks are interviewed by whites.

As Table 2 reveals, the race-of-interviewer variable explains more of the variance in warmth of feeling toward whites than the combined effects of the 15 other terms in the equation. The strength of this effect means that the race of the interviewer is not just a minor source of response error; rather, it needs to be taken explicitly into account in any effort to explain the level or change in the level of affect of blacks toward whites.

The analysis makes clear that the absence of race-of-interviewer effects in Figure 2b is not the result of other variables concealing a true difference due to the race of the interviewer. The coefficient for the effect of the race-of-interviewer variable on feeling toward blacks is not statistically significant (Equation 4 of Table 2).

Closeness measures. Table 3 shows the percent of black respondents who stated that they felt close to blacks and to whites. The closeness items asked whether or not the respondent felt that members of the stated group were similar to the respondent in interests, ideas, and feelings (for the question wording, see the note to Table 3). In Table 3, the percent who stated that they felt close to blacks or to whites is shown according to the race of the interviewer, and for all blacks who were interviewed by a white or a black.

Figures 3a and 3b graph this information for reported closeness to whites (Figure 3a) and to blacks (Figure 3b). As in Figures 2a and 2b, the trend in the reported overall percent who feel close to the group is traced by a solid line. Dashed lines trace the percent who feel close to the group separately for black respondents who were interviewed by another black and for black respondents who were interviewed by a white.

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[10] We also examined more complicated models that provided for interaction effects between the race of the interviewer and the control variables—in particular, interactions between race of the interviewer and region. In a few cases, statistically significant interaction effects were found even though the race-of-interviewer variable by itself was not significant. When this occurs, the analysis we present underestimates the effect of the race of the interviewer. In all such cases, however, the increment to the explained variance due to the interaction effects was very small.

Table 3. Percent of Black Respondents Who Feel Close to Blacks and Whites, by Race of Interviewer, 1976, 1980, 1984

Race of Interviewer	1976		1980		1984	
	Pct.	Base *N*	Pct.	Base *N*	Pct.	Base *N*
	Whites Rated					
Black	10.1	69	11.9	42	8.3	12
White	25.7	105	38.4	112	17.5	80
Signif.	**		**			
Either	19.5	174	31.2	154	16.3	92
	Blacks Rated					
Black	82.6	69	97.6	42	100.0	12
White	75.2	105	83.9	112	71.3	80
Signif.			**		**	
Either	78.2	174	87.7	154	75.0	92

NOTES: The question asked (wording taken from the 1980 survey):
This is a list of some of the groups we talked about earlier in the interview. Please read over the list and tell me the letter for those groups you feel particularly close to—people who are most like you in their ideas and interests and feelings about things.
The format of the question changed somewhat between surveys. At each date, additional groups were listed besides blacks and whites.
Responses coded DK or NA are treated as missing.
** Difference of proportions significant at $p = .05$ using a 2-tailed test.

The results in Figure 3a (closeness to whites) look very similar to the results in Figure 2a (feeling toward whites). In all three surveys, black respondents who were interviewed by a white were much more likely to state that they felt close to whites than blacks who were interviewed by a black. Also, although the proportion of black respondents who reported to white interviewers that they felt close to whites reached a peak in 1980, the proportion of black respondents who reported to black interviewers that they felt close to whites was almost constant over time.

The dotted line in Figure 3a shows what the percent stating they felt close to whites would have been if the responses to white and black interviewers at each survey date were as shown in the dashed lines, but if the proportion of blacks interviewed by black interviewers and by white interviewers at each date were the same as in the 1964 preelection survey. As with the feeling thermometer toward whites, the changing racial composition of the interviewer staff since 1964 appears to

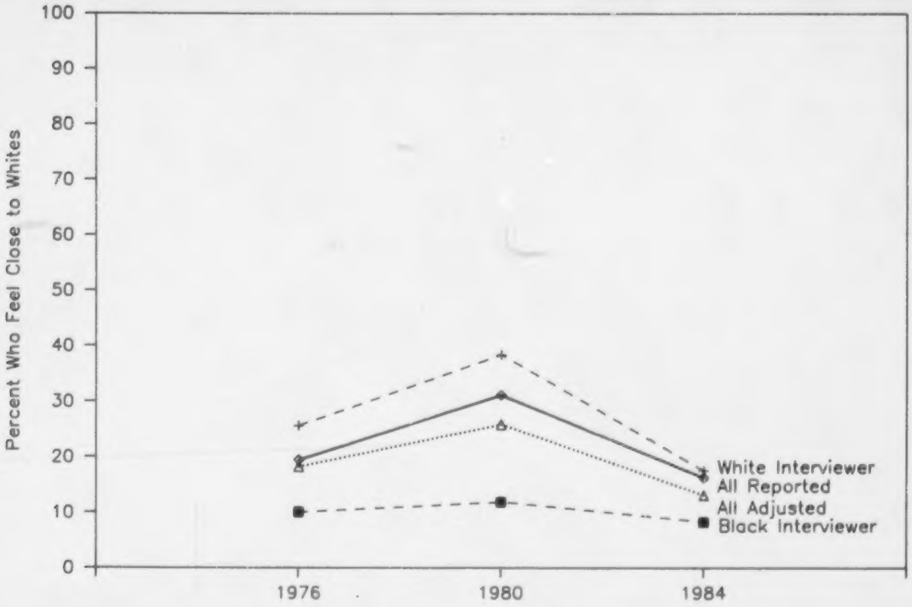

Figure 3a. Percent of Black Respondents Who Feel Close to Whites, as Reported for All Blacks and by Race of Interviewer, and as Adjusted to Reflect Distribution of Interviewers by Race in 1964 Preelection Survey

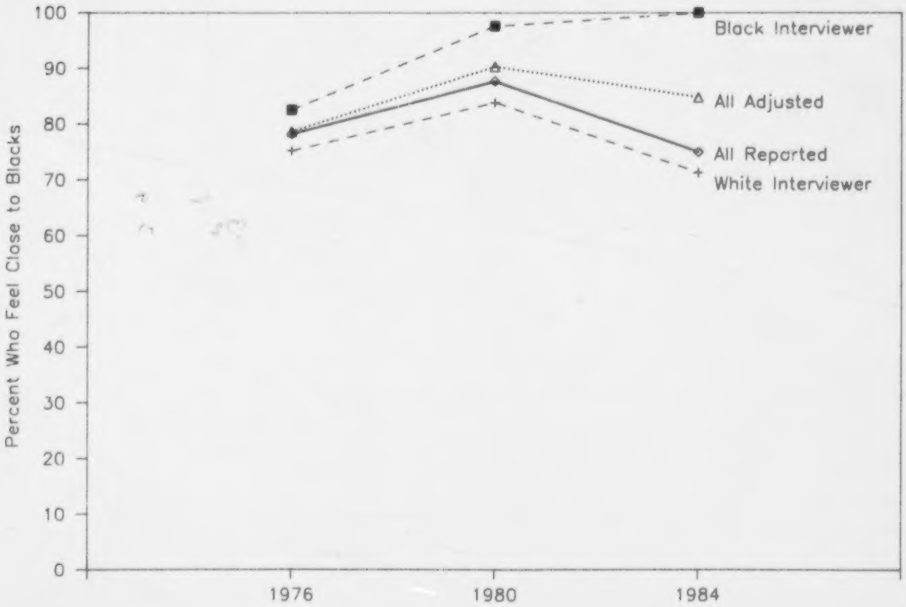

Figure 3b. Percent of Black Respondents Who Feel Close to Blacks, as Reported for All Blacks and by Race of Interviewer, and as Adjusted to Reflect Distribution of Interviewers by Race in 1964 Preelection Survey

have made a difference in the observed attitudes of blacks toward whites.

Figure 3b shows the percent of black respondents who stated they felt close to blacks. The results are also shown separately by race of the interviewer. Unlike the feeling thermometer toward blacks, for which the race of the interviewer had virtually no effect, the measure of closeness to blacks shows a noticeable effect of the race of the interviewer. In all three surveys, blacks interviewed by blacks were more likely to feel close to blacks than were blacks interviewed by whites. The magnitude of this effect increased over time.

The dotted line shows what percent of black respondents would have expressed closeness to other blacks if the racial composition of the interviewer staff in 1984 were the same as in the 1964 survey. Rather than 75% of blacks reporting that they felt close to blacks, 85% would have reported that they felt close to blacks.

The striking difference in the results for the feeling thermometer toward blacks and the question on closeness to blacks underlines the importance of determining whether the effects of the race of the interviewer suggested in Figure 3b are real or are an artifact of small sample size or characteristics of the respondent. Therefore, we again conducted multivariate analyses. However, since the dependent variable is binary, we conducted logit regression analyses in which the dependent variable was coded 1 if the respondent felt close to the given group and 0 if the respondent did not feel close to the given group. We used the same control variables employed in our OLS regression analyses.

Table 4 shows the results of logit regressions for closeness to whites (Equations 1 and 2) and closeness to blacks (Equations 3 and 4). For both dependent variables, the effect of the race of the interviewer is statistically significant. Thus, the race-of-interviewer effects suggested in Figures 3a and 3b do not appear to be an artifact of sample size or respondent characteristics.

Why do the results of the thermometer and closeness measures differ? There is no obvious reason why a strong race-of-interviewer effect would be found on the measure of closeness to blacks, when none was found on the measure of warmth of feelings toward blacks. It is difficult to believe that the affective content of the two kinds of questions differs enough to account for the different susceptibility of the questions to race-of-interviewer effects.

Examination of the format of the questions suggests an explanation. For the thermometer items, respondents were asked about each group in turn without knowing in advance the complete list of groups. For the closeness questions, respondents were shown a card that listed all the groups for whom closeness was to be ascertained. Since "whites" was one of the listed groups, some black respondents could have felt that

Table 4. Logit Regressions of Feeling of Closeness Toward Whites and Blacks on Characteristics of Black Respondents and Race of the Interviewer

Dummy Independent Variable	Dependent Variable							
	Feel Close to Whites (1 = Close, 0 = Not Close)				Feel Close to Blacks (1 = Close, 0 = Not Close)			
	Equation 1		Equation 2		Equation 3		Equation 4	
	b	*t*-ratio	*b*	*t*-ratio	*b*	*t*-ratio	*b*	*t*-ratio
Constant	−2.400**	4.202	−2.084**	3.640	1.016*	1.946	.767	1.460
Survey[a]								
1980 NES	.720**	2.644	.556**	1.990	.534*	1.677	.692*	2.135
1984 NES	−.064	−.180	−.404	−1.113	−.352	−1.091	−.105	−.316
Education[b]								
College graduate	−.181	−.322	−.208	−.363	.732	1.069	.789	1.148
Some college	−.170	−.439	−.144	−.364	.510	1.190	.463	1.073
High sch. grad.	−.081	−.257	−.005	−.015	.340	.962	.295	.830
Sex								
Male	.191	.773	.171	.673	.230	.827	.259	.921
Age[c]								
31–40	−.378	−.952	−.338	−.861	.020	.049	−.005	−.012
41–50	.208	.518	.292	.704	.487	.934	.413	.785
51–60	.230	.614	.364	.942	−.128	−.301	−.218	−.510
61–70	−.163	−.368	−.041	−.089	−.217	−.472	−.367	−.784
Over 70	.303	.667	.618	1.306	−.442	−.948	−.673	−1.404

Region[d]								
South	1.106**	2.328	1.057**	2.202	.000	.001	.018	.044
North—Cent. city	.844*	1.758	.987**	2.083	.316	.730	.206	.470
Interviewer race								
Black			−1.389**	−4.106			1.054**	3.025
Comparison with constant								
chi-square	21.36		41.45		19.68		30.07	
df	13		14		13		14	
p	.06		<.001		.105		.009	
Comparison with base model								
chi-square			20.09				10.39	
df			1				1	
p			<.001				.002	
Pseudo-R^2	.049[e]		.091		.045		.067	
N	416		416		416		416	

NOTE: The data are pooled from the 1976, 1980, and 1984 NES surveys.

[a] The omitted category in all equations is the 1976 NES.

[b] The omitted category is less than completed high school education.

[c] The omitted category is age 18–30.

[d] The omitted category is respondents who resided in the north but outside of a central city of a metropolitan area.

[e] The pseudo-R^2 is the one proposed by Aldrich and Nelson (1984).

* Difference of means significant at $p = .10$ using a 2-tailed test.

** Difference of means significant at $p = .05$ using a 2-tailed test.

stating that they felt close to blacks but not close to whites would have been offensive to a white interviewer. These respondents had two choices of answers that would not offend a white interviewer: they could state that they felt close to *neither* whites nor blacks, or they could state that they felt close to *both* whites and blacks.[11] The "offensive" response would be that they felt close to blacks but not close to whites.

That the format of the question, in combination with the race of the interviewer, influenced the pattern of responses is supported by the results shown in Figures 4a and 4b.[12] These figures show the distribution of responses in four categories: felt close to neither blacks nor whites; felt close to whites but not blacks; felt close to blacks but not whites; and felt close to both blacks and whites.

The most noticeable difference between Figure 4a and Figure 4b is the difference in the percent who stated that they felt close to blacks but not close to whites. The shift from 78.9% of black respondents stating that they were close only to blacks when the interviewer was black (Figure 4b) to 49.5% when the interviewer was white (Figure 4a) was due to a shift both into the category "close to *neither* blacks nor whites" and into the category "close to *both* blacks and whites": 22.2% of those who were interviewed by a white stated that they felt close to neither whites nor blacks, whereas 10.6% of those who were interviewed by another black stated that they felt close to neither whites nor blacks; 27.9% of those who were interviewed by a white stated that they felt close to both blacks and whites, whereas 10.6% of those who were interviewed by another black stated that they felt close to both blacks and whites. Thus, it appears that black respondents were about equally likely to try to avoid offending a white interviewer by stating that they felt close to *neither* blacks nor whites as by stating that they felt close to *both* blacks and whites.

In summary, it appears that the format of the closeness items contained an implied comparison of attitudes toward whites and other groups, even though such a comparison was not explicitly suggested.[13] As a result, the politeness-to-a-stranger explanation could account for

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[11] It also would not have been offensive to a white interviewer for a black respondent to state that he or she felt close to whites but not close to blacks. Only one out of the 425 black respondents chose that pattern of responses. Respondents also had another possible response: refusal to answer the question, or stating that they "don't know." Only 5 of the 425 blacks in the pooled data set were scored as "missing" on the closeness measures.

[12] These figures are based on the pooled responses from the 1976, 1980, and 1984 postelection surveys.

[13] An explicit comparison question was asked after the respondent stated whether he or she felt close to each of the listed groups: "Look at the list again. Of the groups you just mentioned, which one do you feel closest to?"

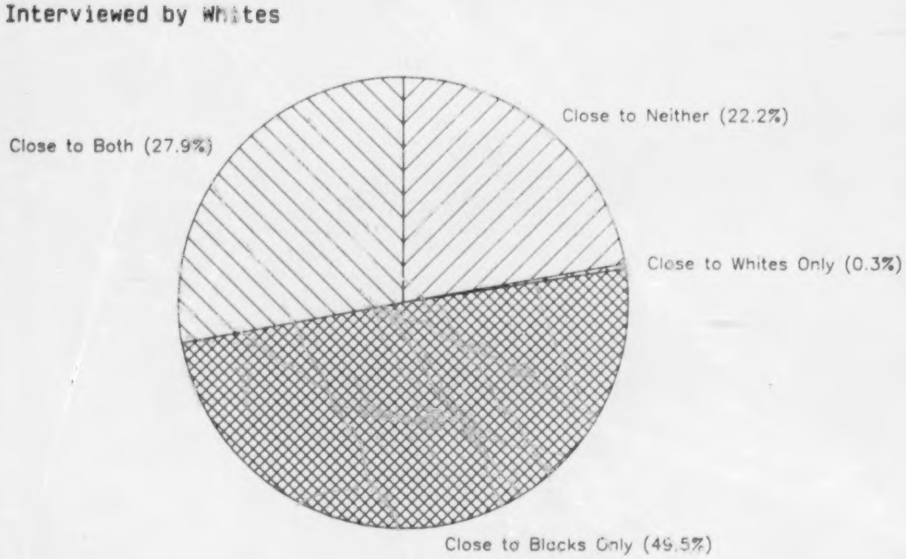
Interviewed by Whites

Figure 4a. Percent of Black Respondents Interviewed by Whites Who Feel Close to Neither Whites nor Blacks, Only Whites, Only Blacks, or Both Whites and Blacks

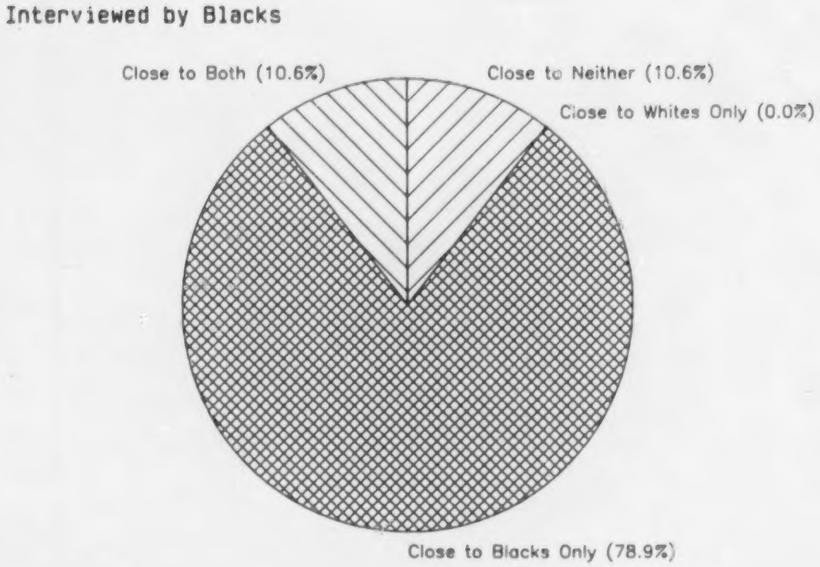
Interviewed by Blacks

Figure 4b. Percent of Black Respondents Interviewed by Blacks Who Feel Close to Neither Whites nor Blacks, Only Whites, Only Blacks, or Both Whites and Blacks

the race-of-interviewer effect on expressed closeness to blacks, even though no such effect was found on expressed feelings of warmth toward blacks.

Although the format of the closeness items may be more economical than that of the thermometer items, it introduces a response effect of the race of the interviewer. Moreover, as shown in Figure 3b, because of the changing racial composition of the SRC interviewer staff, black respondents appeared overall to become less close to blacks between 1976 and 1984; however, had this composition not changed or had all black respondents been interviewed by a black in each survey, the observed closeness to blacks would have *increased* over time.

POLICY ISSUES

Pushing too slowly. Table 5 shows the percent of black respondents who stated that civil rights leaders have been pushing "too slowly," in response to a question whether civil rights leaders have been pushing too fast, too slowly, or at about the right speed (for the wording, see the note to Table 5). The results are also graphed in Figure 5.

At every date, black respondents were much more likely to tell a black interviewer than a white interviewer that civil rights leaders were pushing too slowly. A logit regression analysis, shown in Table 6, indicates that the effect of the race of the interviewer is not an artifact of respondent characteristics. Over the two decades, militancy on this item increased among both blacks interviewed by whites and blacks interviewed by blacks. But our synthetic calculations suggest that overall levels of black militancy increased more than the observed results suggest. Blacks would have expressed more militant attitudes if the proportion of blacks interviewed by blacks had not declined substantially during the past two decades

Busing. Table 7 shows the responses to another policy question, whether the respondent favored busing to achieve racial integration. The responses were reported on a seven-point scale ranging from favoring busing to achieve integration (coded 1) to favoring keeping neighborhood schools (coded 7). The differences according to the race of the interviewer are small and inconsistent across surveys.

It is possible that the busing issue differs in content according to the locale, so that this item is interpreted differently in different settings. Moreover, a multiple regression analysis (not shown here) suggests that within the black population, attitudes toward busing are not consistently related to education, age, sex, or region; these factors together account for less than 1% of the variance in support for busing. This regression analysis confirms that not all race-related policy issues are affected by the race of the interviewer.

Table 5. Percent of Black Respondents Who Say That Civil Rights People Have Been Pushing Too Slowly, by Race of Interviewer, 1964, 1976, 1980, 1984, and 1986

Race of Interviewer	1964 Pct.	1964 Base *N*	1976 Pct.	1976 Base *N*	1980 Pct.	1980 Base *N*	1984 Pct.	1984 Base *N*	1986 Pct.	1986 Base *N*
Black	31.5	73	47.3	91	63.4	41	66.7	12	54.3	35
White	17.7	79	30.6	121	35.6	104	49.3	75	43.9	114
Signif.	**		**		**					
Either	24.3	152	37.7	212	43.4	145	51.7	87	46.3	149

NOTES: The question asked:
Some say that the civil rights people have been trying to push too fast. Others feel they haven't pushed fast enough. How about you: Do you think that civil rights leaders are trying to push too fast, are going too slowly, or are they moving about the right speed?
Responses coded as DK or NA are treated as missing.
** Difference of proportions significant at $p = .05$ using a 2-tailed test.

Table 6. Logit Regression of Whether Civil Rights Leaders Have Been Pushing Too Slowly, on Characteristics of Black Respondents and Race of Interviewer

Dummy Independent Variable	Dependent Variable: Pushing Too Slowly (1 = Yes, 0 = No)			
	Equation 1		Equation 2	
	b	*t*-ratio	*b*	*t*-ratio
Constant	−1.394**	−4.069	−1.773**	−4.895
Survey[a]				
1976 NES	.590**	2.389	.647**	2.574
1980 NES	.745**	2.856	.937**	3.474
1984 NES	1.054**	3.467	1.356**	4.263
1986 NES	.789**	2.976	1.004**	3.655
Education[b]				
College graduate	.866**	2.659	.944**	2.854
Some college	.662**	2.686	.680**	2.712
High sch. grad.	.292	1.385	.257	1.200
Sex				
Male	.429**	2.636	.434**	2.624
Age[c]				
31–40	.158	.706	.138	.605
41–50	.261	1.007	.206	.783
51–60	−.223	−.842	−.304	−1.129
61–70	−.147	−.474	−.217	−.688
Over 70	−.041	−.122	−.158	−.467
Region[d]				
South	−.302	−1.226	−.256	−1.014
North—Central city	.121	.496	.079	.317
Interviewer race				
Black			.807**	4.542
Comparison with constant				
chi-square	63.8		84.8	
df	15		16	
p	<.001		<.001	
Comparison with base model				
chi-square			21.0	
df			1	
p			<.001	
Pseudo-R^2	.080		.103	
N	735		735	

NOTE: The data are pooled from the 1964, 1976, 1980, 1984, and 1986 NES surveys.

[a] The omitted category is the 1964 NES.

[b] The omitted category is less than completed high school education.

[c] The omitted category is age 18–30.

[d] The omitted category is respondents who resided in the north but outside of a central city of a metropolitan area.

** Coefficient significant at $p = .05$ using a 2-tailed test.

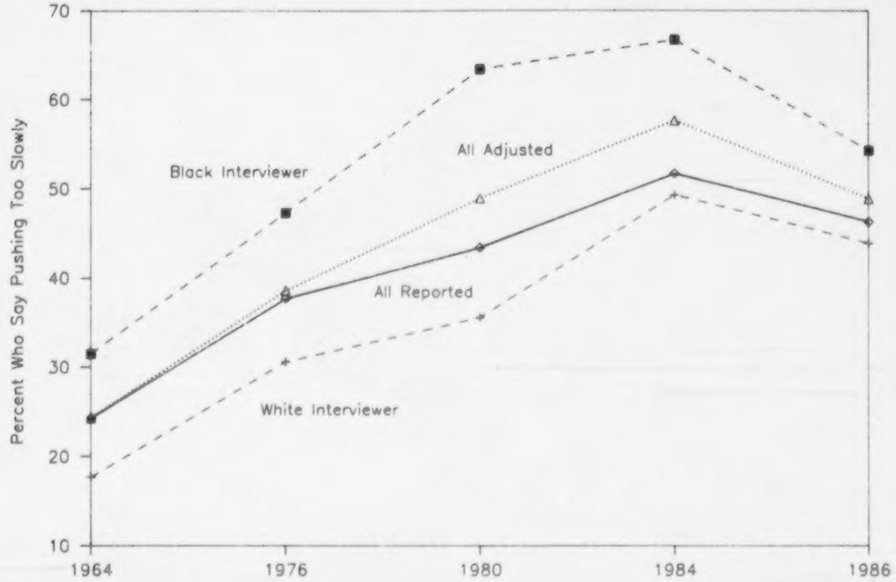

Figure 5. Percent of Black Respondents Who Say Civil Rights Leaders Have Been Pushing Too Slowly, as Reported for All Blacks and by Race of Interviewer, and as Adjusted to Reflect Distribution of Interviewers by Race in 1964

Table 7. Mean Score of Black Respondents on Question About the Use of Busing to Achieve Racial Integration, by Race of Interviewer, 1976, 1980, and 1984

Race of Interviewer	1976		1980		1984	
	Mean	Base *N*	Mean	Base *N*	Mean	Base *N*
Black	3.90	80	3.47	36	5.11	9
White	3.80	110	4.30	97	4.71	65
Signif.			*			
Either	3.84	190	4.08	133	4.76	74

NOTES: The question asked:
There is much discussion about the best way to deal with racial problems. Some people think achieving racial integration of schools is so important that it justifies busing children to schools out of their own neighborhoods. Others think letting children go to their neighborhood schools is so important that they oppose busing. Where would you place yourself on this [7-point] scale or haven't you thought much about this? [1 = Bus to achieve integration, 7 = Keep neighborhood schools]
Responses coded as DK, NA, or "Haven't Thought Much" are treated as missing.
* Difference of means significant at $p = .10$ using a 2-tailed test.

Aid to minorities. Table 8 shows the mean responses to a question about whether members of minority groups should receive aid from the government or whether the minorities should help themselves. This, too, is in the form of a seven-point scale (see the note to Table 8). As in the case of the answers to the question on busing, the differences in the mean score by race of the interviewer are small and inconsistent across surveys. A regression analysis (not shown) confirms that the race of the interviewer is not a significant factor in the responses to the aid-to-minorities question.

Spending on blacks, welfare, and food stamps. Table 9 shows the responses to questions about whether the government should increase spending on blacks, welfare, and food stamps. For all of these items, black respondents were much more likely to favor increased spending if interviewed by a black than if interviewed by a white. Logit regression analyses (not shown) indicate a significant race-of-interviewer effect for spending on blacks and on food stamps, with those black respondents who were interviewed by another black being more likely to support increased spending. Although the coefficient for the race-of-interviewer variable was not significant in the logit regression for increased spending on welfare, this could be because the spending on welfare question was only asked in one survey and the sample size was small.

The results for the spending-on-blacks item are interesting because they contrast with the result for government aid to minorities. For spending on blacks, there are clear race-of-interviewer effects; for aid to minorities, there are none. Part of the explanation could be that the spending item refers expressly to blacks, whereas the aid-to-minorities item does not. But this is certainly not the entire explanation, because the responses to the spending-on-welfare and spending-on-food-stamps items, which do not refer expressly to blacks, show significant race-of-interviewer effects.

In sum, the results of our tests for race-of-interviewer effects on the policy items are mixed. For some items (militancy about civil rights, spending on blacks), the race of the interviewer is associated with large differences in the responses and accounts for more of the variance than do differences in respondent characteristics. But for other items (school busing, government aid to minorities) the race of the interviewer has no significant bearing on the responses.

Implications

The race-of-interviewer effects on the feeling thermometer and closeness measures toward whites seem to fit Schuman and Converse's

Table 8. Mean Score on Government Aid to Minorities Scale for Black Respondents, by Race of Interviewer, 1976, 1978, 1980, 1982, 1984, and 1986

Race of Interviewer	1976		1978		1980		1982		1984		1986	
	Mean	Base *N*	Mean	Base *N*	Mean	Base *N*	Mean	Base *N*	Mean	Base *N*	Mean	Base *N*
Black	2.53	78	2.32	60	2.80	35	2.38	32	2.58	26	3.35	31
White	2.38	111	2.87	126	3.32	88	2.99	86	2.89	148	3.21	103
Signif.			*									
Either	2.44	189	2.69	186	3.17	123	2.82	118	2.84	174	3.25	134

NOTES: The question asked:
Some people feel that the government in Washington should make every effort to improve the social and economic position of blacks and other minority groups. Suppose those people are at one end of the scale at point number 1. Others feel that the government should not make any special effort to help minorities because they should help themselves. Suppose these people are at the other end at point 7. And of course, some other people have opinions somewhere in between at points 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6. Where would you place yourself on this scale or haven't you thought much about this?
Responses coded as DK, NA, or "Haven't Thought Much" are treated as missing.
* Difference of means significant at $p = .10$ using a 2-tailed test.

Table 9. Percent of Black Respondents Who Would Like Increased Government Spending on Various Programs and Groups, by Race of Interviewer, 1982 and 1986

Race of Interviewer	1982		1986	
	Pct.	Base *N*	Pct.	Base *N*
	Prefer Increased Spending on Blacks			
Black	91.4	35	90.7	75
White	77.1	96	69.4	222
Signif.	*		**	
Either	80.9	131	74.7	297
	Prefer Increased Spending on Welfare			
Black	62.9	35		
White	51.0	102		
Signif.				
Either	54.0	137		
	Prefer Increased Spending on Food Stamps			
Black	67.7	31	70.0	70
White	45.4	97	48.6	212
Signif.	**		**	
Either	50.8	128	53.9	282

NOTES: The wording of the question differed between 1982 and 1986. In 1982, it was:

> This country is faced with many problems, none of which can be solved easily or inexpensively. I'm going to name some of these problems, and for each one I'd like you to tell me whether you think the federal government is spending too much money on it, too little money, or about the right amount. . . .

In 1986, the wording was:

> If you had a say in making up the federal budget this year, for which of the following programs would you like to see spending increased and for which would you like to see spending decreased—
>
> Should federal government spending on ——— be *increased, decreased,* or *kept about the same?*

We treat the "too little" in 1982 as equivalent to "increased" in 1986, "about the right amount" as equivalent to "kept about the same," and "too much" as equivalent to "decreased."

Responses coded DK or NA are treated as missing.

* Difference of proportions significant at $p = .10$ using a 2-tailed test.

** Difference of proportions significant at $p = .05$ using a 2-tailed test.

(1971) view of the interview situation in which black respondents modify their answers to avoid offending a white interviewer. The race of the interviewer comes into play in situations in which there are unambiguous references to race and a perceived threat to the maintenance of a polite conversation between the respondent and the interviewer. This by itself, however, cannot explain why the race of the interviewer affects responses to questions about closeness to blacks but does not affect the feeling thermometer toward blacks. We think that the format of the "closeness" items implied a comparison between attitudes toward whites and attitudes toward other groups even though such a comparison was not explicitly indicated in the question.

The sources of the differences in the race-of-interviewer effects among the policy items are not obvious. In general, it appears that for items for which the respondent characteristics accounted for little variance, the race of the interviewer failed to account for a significant amount of variance; while for items for which the respondent characteristics accounted for a moderate amount of the variance, the race of the interviewer accounted for a significant amount of the variance. This means that the race of the interviewer does not serve as a compensatory cue in situations when respondents have no other compelling reason (based on their socioeconomic status, for example) to prefer one policy position to another. At the same time, however, we think it is unlikely that for the attitudes in which the race-of-interviewer variable matters, the race of the interviewer is actually capturing variance that could have been accounted for by a different set of respondent characteristics. Therefore, we do not think that the race-of-interviewer effects are spurious.

The major lesson from this analysis is that there is no simple and obvious rule that would allow the survey analyst to predict whether there are likely to be race-of-interviewer effects on the answers to a given question. On the one hand, this means that the conventional wisdom about the assignment of interviewers by race is neither right nor wrong for all purposes. On the other hand, this means that researchers need to be especially careful to assure that interviewer characteristics are not distorting either the aggregate responses on individual items or the relations between variables. On the latter point, Anderson, Silver, and Abramson (1988) showed that the race-of-interviewer effects on civic attitudes and voting turnout led to an exaggeration of the correlation between civic attitudes and turnout. Based on our analysis here, we think that the race-of-interviewer effects on measures of group consciousness (using feeling thermometer and closeness-to-groups items) are also likely to exaggerate the correlation between group consciousness and political participation.

For these reasons, it is important that information about the race of the interviewer be included in the publicly distributed data from NES surveys. The inclusion of this information in the 1986 NES data file is a welcome event. The release of interviewer data for earlier NES surveys would also be valuable, as would their release in other widely used surveys produced by the SRC, NORC, and other survey organizations.

This information is important for several kinds of study designs. First, for studies in which researchers are concerned with tracking trends over time in race-related attitudes, information about the race of the interviewers could be critical if the racial composition of the interviewer staff changes substantially over time. Second, even for surveys in which researchers are not concerned with trends over time, analysts need to be more alert to how the racial composition of the interviewer staff can affect response variation, both on race-related items and on other items.

Third, for studies that test alternative versions of questions, such as in a split-half design, analysts need to consider that differences in the results obtained with alternative question wordings could be partly a consequence of the race of the interviewers. A good illustration of such an effect can be found in the 1986 NES survey. The seven-point scale item on aid to minorities that had appeared in several previous NES surveys was administered to half of the respondents in 1986; the other half were asked a question that was identical to the aid-to-minorities question except that in place of the word "minorities" was the word "blacks." Table 10 compares the results for the two questions.

Although the number of cases involved in the split-half test is very small, Table 10 is instructive about why it is important to test for race-of-interviewer effects. A researcher who did not consider the race of the interviewer at all might conclude from row C of Table 10 that blacks are more supportive of "self-help" when they are asked about government aid to blacks than when they are asked about government aid to minorities.[14] If the measurement of the attitudes were not affected by the race of the interviewer or by other sources of systematic error, the results could have important implications for our understanding of the attitudes of blacks toward federal aid programs. In fact, however, the results in row C are an artifact of the racial composition of the interviewer staff: blacks who were interviewed by a black (row A) were more in favor of government aid to blacks than they were of government aid to minorities, whereas blacks who were interviewed by a white were more in favor of government aid to minorities than they were of government aid to blacks (row B).

Therefore, the overall results in row C are a consequence of the fact

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[14] However, this difference is not statistically significant.

Table 10. Mean Level of Support for Government Aid to Minorities and Government Aid to Blacks, for Black Respondents in the 1986 National Election Study

Race of Interviewer	Aid to Minorities		Aid to Blacks		
	Mean	Base *N*	Mean	Base *N*	Significance
A. Black	3.35	31	2.90	39	
B. White	3.21	103	3.79	100	**
Significance			**		
C. Either	3.25	134	3.54	139	

NOTES: The wording of the aid-to-minorities question is given in the note to Table 8. The aid-to-blacks question is identical, except that the word "blacks" is substituted for the word "minorities." 1 = Government aid, 7 = Minorities/blacks help themselves.

** Difference of means significant at $p = .05$ using a 2-tailed test.

that a majority of black respondents were interviewed by a white. Had the conventional wisdom about the assignment of interviewers by race been followed in the 1986 NES survey—i.e., had all black respondents been interviewed by blacks—the direction of the difference in the mean response to the two versions of the questions would have been reversed. Underlying this reversal is the large race-of-interviewer effect on the responses to the aid-to-blacks item, in contrast to the negligible race-of-interviewer effect on the aid-to-minorities item. Also, the effect runs in opposite directions on the two items.

Although the aid-to-blacks question might seem to be more attractive than the aid-to-minorities question for gauging attitudes on race-related policies, it appears to be more susceptible to the effects of the race of the interviewer. Thus, attention to the racial composition of the interviewer staff could be critical both to assessing the utility of alternative versions of a question and to the substantive conclusions one draws about trends in race-related attitudes.

Appendix

Table A1. List of NES Surveys in Which Items Used in the Analysis Appeared

Survey Item	1964		1976		1978	1980		1982	1984		1986
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Post	Pre	Post	Post	Pre	Post	Post
Therm. blacks	X			X			X	X		X	X
Therm. whites	X			X			X	X		X	
Close to blacks				X			X			X	
Close to whites				X			X			X	
Civil rights leaders pushing too fast	X		X			X				X	X
Aid to minorities			X		X		X	X	X		X
School busing			X				X			X	
Spending—blacks								X			X
Spending—welfare								X			
Spending—food stamps								X			X

NOTE: The 1978, 1982, and 1986 NES surveys consisted only of postelection interviews.

Table A2. Distribution of Interviews of Black Respondents in Pre- and Postelection Surveys, by Race of Interviewer, in SRC/CPS National Election Studies of 1964, 1976, 1978, 1980, 1982, 1984, and 1986

Race of:		1964[a]		1976[b]		1978	1980		1982	1984[c]		1986
Resp.	Interv.	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Post	Pre	Post	Post	Pre	Post	Post
N of Cases												
Black	Black	75	55	93	69	80	50	42	37	35	12	76
Black	White	84	73	134	107	152	123	113	111	200	82	229
N of Interviewers												
Black	Black	15	14	16	14	18	8	7	6	5	4	12
Black	White	33	30	48	43	53	46	44	42	41	29	53

NOTE: Cases for which data are missing, or in which respondent or interviewer is not white or black, are excluded.

[a] The data for 1964 exclude cases in the "Negro Supplement."

[b] Although a weighting factor is usually employed with the 1976 survey, we use the unweighted results.

[c] The postelection data for 1984 exclude cases in which the interviews were conducted by telephone.

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MEASURING PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THE NEW CHRISTIAN RIGHT

THE PERILS OF POINT ESTIMATION

LEE SIGELMAN AND
STANLEY PRESSER

Abstract It has been reported that 30% of American adults support the "sociomoral platform of the Moral Majority" (Simpson, 1983). We lodge several criticisms of this estimate and/or the way it has subsequently been interpreted, involving the treatment of "don't know" responses, the selection of response category cutting points, the passage of time, the effects of question wording, and substance. We derive a much different estimate of public support for the Moral Majority platform in the same year, but our more basic conclusion is simply that public opinion on this issue, as on most complex issues, cannot be fairly reflected by a single number.

The rise of the "New Christian Right" is one of the most striking political developments of the past decade. Social scientists have explored many of the issues posed by this movement, ranging from its sources to its impact (Liebman and Wuthnow, 1983). Among the most provocative of these issues is the movement's size. To some analysts, estimating the level of public support for the religious right is the bedrock on which discussion of the movement must rest.

Attempts to estimate the popularity of the New Christian Right have relied on sample surveys of the general public (see, e.g., Buell and Sigelman, 1985; Day-Lower, 1983; Gallup, 1981, 1982; Shupe and Stacey, 1983; Wilcox, 1987; Yankelovich, 1981). Each analysis has produced a point estimate of the proportion of American adults who identify with, agree with, or support the religious right. But these estimates vary widely.

Some of these differences are, in principle, reconcilable. For example, some of the surveys were conducted at different times and sampled different populations. But it is naive to assume that all the

LEE SIGELMAN is Professor of Political Science and Communication, and Dean of the Faculty of Social and Behavioral Sciences at the University of Arizona. STANLEY PRESSER is Director of the Sociology Program at the National Science Foundation.

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various results could be reconciled to produce one "best" estimate (see Moore and Whitt, 1986). Indeed, the search for a single number representing support for the New Christian Right is like that for the Holy Grail.

A basic canon of survey research is that alternative measurement procedures (e.g., question wording differences or differing survey contexts) can produce very different results (Turner and Martin, 1984). Because no measurement method can be shown to be superior to all others, there may be no "true" value for public opinion on an issue.

Although this is an old lesson, it bears repeating because it is remarkably easy to forget. In this paper we make the case anew, in the context of one of the most sophisticated efforts to date, Simpson's (1983) study of public support for the New Christian Right. More specifically, we focus on one of three questions that Simpson addresses in his chapter: "First, how should support for the sociomoral platform of the Moral Majority be measured and, given a measurement method, what proportion of the American population is positively oriented toward the platform?" (p. 187). The recent downfall of televangelists Jim and Tammy Bakker and other highly publicized incidents involving conservative Christian leaders have, according to recent media polls, undermined public support for the religious right. Moreover, support for the Moral Majority per se may no longer be of pressing interest, especially since that organization has recently been reconstituted as part of the umbrella Liberty Foundation. Still, at the time Simpson undertook his analysis, "Moral Majority" served as a code phrase or shorthand for the New Religious Right, as it continues to do today. It is in that context that it seems worthwhile to demonstrate that support for the Moral Majority platform cannot be represented by any single number.

Simpson's Estimate of Support for the Moral Majority Platform

How many Americans agree with the political ideas articulated by the New Christian Right, regardless of whether they identify with the Moral Majority, endorse Pat Robertson's presidential candidacy, or belong to any religious or political organization? Simpson (1983) interpreted acceptance of the "Moral Majority platform," which incorporates key elements of the broader New Christian Right's social and political agenda, as a measure of agreement with the New Christian Right, and we follow that precedent here. According to Simpson, the Moral Majority platform is accepted *in its entirety* by 30% of the American public. Simpson went on to characterize another 42% of the public as ideological "fellow travelers" of the Moral Majority. He also undertook an analysis of the correlates of acceptance of the Moral Majority platform. However, we focus exclusively on his estimate that 30% of the American public agrees with the entire Moral Majority platform—an estimate often cited to establish the potential political clout of the New Christian Right.

Simpson arrived at this 30% estimate by selecting from the 1977 NORC General Social Survey (GSS) four items concerning women's role in society (FEFAM), abortion (ABANY), homosexuality (HOMOSEX), and school prayer (PRAYER), and categorizing responses to each item as either consistent or inconsistent with "the sociomoral platform of the Moral Majority" (see Table 1).[1] Dichotomizing the four items yielded sixteen different response patterns, by far the most common of which proved to be the combination of the four pro–Moral Majority platform answers. Some 30% of the 1977 GSS respondents said that women should take care of the home and family while men work outside the home, that women should not be able to obtain a legal abortion for any reason, that homosexuality is always wrong, and that mandatory religious exercises should be permitted in the public schools. This was more than three times the number in any other category and approximately five times the number who opposed the Moral Majority position on all four issues.

Our qualms about this estimate stem from a wide range of considerations, ranging from relatively narrow, technical aspects of the estimation process to broader, more conceptual issues. We begin with the least significant of these concerns and build toward the most significant.

THE TREATMENT OF "DON'T KNOWS"

In any survey, some respondents take no position on an issue. How these "don't knows" should be handled depends on the purpose of the analysis. Simpson's purpose was to estimate support for the Moral Majority platform in the American public, not support for the Moral Majority platform in that segment of the American public that holds opinions on all four relevant issues. Therefore it would have been appropriate to interpret "don't know" responses as indications of *non*-support for (though not necessarily opposition to) the Moral Majority platform; the percentage of the public endorsing the Moral Majority platform would then be the number agreeing with the Moral Major-

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[1] The variable labels are those used in the GSS codebooks. We employ them here to provide a ready reference for readers. We obtained the GSS datasets through the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research; neither the consortium nor the collectors of the data are responsible for our analyses and interpretations.

Table I. Responses to Simpson's "Moral Majority Platform" Items, 1977

"Please tell me whether or not *you* think it should be possible for a pregnant woman to obtain a *legal* abortion if the woman wants it for any reason." (ABANY)

Yes	36.6%
No[a]	60.5
Don't know	2.9

"What about sexual relations between two *adults* the same sex—do you think it is always wrong, almost always wrong, wrong only sometimes, or not wrong at all?" (HOMOSEX)

Always wrong[a]	68.6%
Almost always wrong	5.5
Wrong only sometimes	7.2
Not wrong at all	14.2
Don't know	4.5

"It is much better for everyone involved if the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and family." (FEFAM)

Strongly agree[a]	18.0%
Agree[a]	46.8
Disagree	27.7
Strongly disagree	6.0
Don't know	1.5

"The United States Supreme Court has ruled that no state or local government may *require* the reading of the Lord's Prayer or Bible verses in public schools. What are your views on this—do you approve or disapprove of the court ruling?" (PRAYER)

Approve	33.5%
Disapprove[a]	64.2
No opinion	2.3

NOTE: Parenthesized variable names are the identifiers in the GSS codebook and data set.

[a] A response classified as supportive of the Moral Majority platform.

ity position on all four items, expressed as a percentage of all respondents who answered the items. However, Simpson dropped from the analysis respondents who gave a "don't know" response to any question. As it happens, opinionation on the four items ran high: only 142 respondents answered "don't know" to any of these items. Therefore, the questionable treatment of "don't knows" could not have more than a minor effect on Simpson's estimate. Even so, it is incorrect to say that 30% of the GSS respondents supported the Moral Majority platform. One *could* say either (a) that 30% of those who held opinions on these issues (i.e., the 411 who shared the Moral Majority positions, expressed as a percentage of the 1,370 who offered opinions about all four issues) shared the Moral Majority view, or (b) that 27% of the GSS respondents (411 as a percentage of the 1,512 for whom answers were recorded on all four questions) shared the Moral Majority view. Again, an adjustment of three percentage points is hardly fundamental. As a general rule, though, when the intent is to describe the overall distribution of opinions, one should be certain to include all respondents in the estimate.[2]

CUTTING POINTS

As we have indicated, Simpson categorized responses to each question as either consistent or inconsistent with the Moral Majority's position. The agree–disagree and yes–no formats of the PRAYER and ABANY items preordained the cutting points on these two items, but the HOMOSEX and FEFAM items offered four response categories apiece: homosexuality could be "always wrong," "almost always wrong," "wrong only sometimes," or "not wrong at all," and respondents could strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree that the proper role of women is to care for home and family. Because the Moral Majority categorically opposes homosexuality, Simpson dichotomized the HOMOSEX item between the first and second responses. On the other hand, while the Moral Majority espouses an extremely traditionalistic view of women's role, Simpson chose to cut the FEFAM item between the second and third responses. As Table 1 reveals, his handling of this item had a major bearing on the percentage of respondents ultimately classified as fully supportive of the Moral Majority platform. In fact, had he split the item between the first and second responses to that single item, then instead of 27% of the 1977 GSS respondents, only 9% could have been considered fully supportive of the Moral Majority platform. Whether the cutting point Simpson did not use better captures the Moral Majority position than the one he did use is a debatable issue. We think it does, but the real point is that a point estimate like 27% (or, for that matter, 9%) is a function, among other things, of the manner in which a researcher treats the response categories on the items in question. Since there is no single "correct" way to define cutting points, it follows that there is no single "correct" point estimate.

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[2] Interviewers sometimes neglect to ask a question or to record an answer. These instances, designated as "no answers," are excluded from the present analysis. Thus the percentages in the text and tables are for all respondents for whom answers were recorded rather than for all respondents. For 1977, this means that 18 GSS respondents were omitted when Simpson's four-item categorization was employed.

POINT-IN-TIME ESTIMATES

A third problem with the 30% estimate is that it was based on data that are now a decade old, even though it is still cited as though it were current. Of course, this is more of a problem of others continuing to rely on Simpson's result after it was published than of the original result itself. If attitudes on the issues in question were unchanging, the time lag would pose no problem. However, there is some evidence that social attitudes in this country have been changing (Smith, 1982; but see also Davis, 1980). In this light, it seems possible that the 30% estimate was outdated by the time it reached print; any liberalization of traditional social attitudes after 1977 would have made pro–Moral Majority platform attitudes less widespread than they were in 1977.

Since only two of the items appeared in the GSS in both 1977 (the year of the survey on which Simpson relied) and 1983 (the year his analysis was published), we cannot determine precisely how much bias the reliance on 1977 data introduced. We do know that there was little change in the 1977 and 1983 opinion distributions on one of the four items: responding to the ABANY question, 61% of the GSS respondents agreed with the Moral Majority position in 1977 and 64% did so in 1983 (see Table 2). If anything, then, use of 1977 data on attitudes toward abortion may have slightly *under*stated public endorsement of the Moral Majority's position in the early 1980s. However, a more substantial change is evident on the PRAYER item, where agreement with the Moral Majority's position declined from 64% in 1977 to 57% in 1983, a 7-percentage-point movement away from the Moral Majority position.

The HOMOSEX item was not repeated in 1983, and the 1977 and 1983 GSS data sets contain no other appropriate item on homosexuality. Nor was the FEFAM item repeated, but in both 1977 and 1983 two very closely related questions on women's familial role were asked. On both of these there were large-scale changes between 1977 and 1983. On FEHOME, the percentage of respondents agreeing with the Moral Majority position declined 15 points, from 37% to 22%, while on FEWORK the percentage dropped 10 points, from 33% to 23%. Thus, if these two items are any indication (and on their face they seem no less valid as indicators of support for the Moral Majority platform than the FEFAM item that Simpson employed), some 30% to 40% of the 1977 support for

Table 2. 1977–83 Comparison of Responses to Two "Moral Majority Platform" Items and Two Related Items

"Please tell me whether or not *you* think it should be possible for a pregnant woman to obtain a *legal* abortion if the woman wants it for any reason." (ABANY)

	1977	*1983*
Yes	36.6%	33.2%
No	60.5	63.6
Don't know	2.9	3.2

"The United States Supreme Court has ruled that no state or local government may *require* the reading of the Lord's Prayer or Bible verses in public schools. What are your views on this—do you approve or disapprove of the court ruling?" (PRAYER)

	1977	*1983*
Approve	33.5%	39.6%
Disapprove	64.2	56.7
No opinion	2.3	3.8

"Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Women should take care of running their homes and leave running the country up to men." (FEHOME)

	1977	*1983*
Agree	37.2%	22.4%
Disagree	60.3	74.2
Not sure	2.5	3.5

"Do you approve or disapprove of a married woman earning money in business or industry if she has a husband capable of supporting her?" (FEWORK)

	1977	*1983*
Approve	65.4%	75.0%
Disapprove	33.2	22.9
Don't know	1.4	2.0

the Moral Majority's position on the role of women in the family fell away by 1983.

A different cut at the question of contemporaneity is shown in Table 3, which summarizes the responses to the four Simpson questions in the 1985 GSS. As compared to the 1977 responses, in 1985 agreement with the Moral Majority position on abortion held almost exactly at the same level, and agreement that homosexuality is always wrong increased slightly. But on the other two items (and especially FEFAM),

Table 3. Responses to Simpson's "Moral Majority Platform" Items, 1985

"Please tell me whether or not *you* think it should be possible for a pregnant woman to obtain a *legal* abortion if the woman wants it for any reason." (ABANY)

Yes	35.8%
No[a]	61.1
Don't know	3.1

"What about sexual relations between two *adults* of the same sex—do you think it is always wrong, almost always wrong, wrong only sometimes, or not wrong at all?" (HOMOSEX)

Always wrong[a]	73.0%
Almost always wrong	3.9
Wrong only sometimes	6.8
Not wrong at all	13.3
Don't know	3.1

"It is much better for everyone involved if the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and family." (FEFAM)

Strongly agree[a]	9.8%
Agree[a]	37.8
Disagree	37.6
Strongly disagree	13.2
Don't know	1.7

"The United States Supreme Court has ruled that no state or local government may *require* the reading of the Lord's Prayer or Bible verses in public schools. What are your views on this—do you approve or disapprove of the court ruling?" (PRAYER)

Approve	43.1%
Disapprove[a]	53.9
No opinion	3.1

[a] A response classified as supportive of the Moral Majority platform.

there were more substantial shifts away from the Moral Majority position. Overall, in 1985 323 of the 1,522 GSS respondents (21%) who answered all four of these questions fully shared the Moral Majority platform as defined by Simpson, down from 27% in 1977.

In sum, while Simpson's estimate continues to be cited as applicable today, there is reason to believe that it was out-of-date by the mid-1980s. A gap of only a few years may seem trivial, but when one is trying to estimate the current distribution of opinions in an era of rapidly changing social attitudes, it may not be trivial at all.

SINGLE INDICATORS OF COMPLEX CONCEPTS

The fact that we find very different patterns of change over time depending on the item analyzed brings us to our most important criticism of the 30% estimate: it is a function of the particular questions used. To demonstrate this in vivid terms, we will use different GSS items to reestimate the percentage of Americans who in 1977 approved of the entire Moral Majority platform, and see how our estimate stacks up against Simpson's. The purpose of this exercise is not to derive a better point estimate, but to demonstrate how fragile the whole enterprise is. As we are about to see, substituting one defensible set of indicators for another defensible set of indicators produces a dramatically different result.

The first step is to consider the phenomenon we are trying to measure. A "platform" is an agenda for action, a set of *policy statements*. Whether homosexuality is "always wrong" is not a policy issue, though it is full of policy implications, such as whether homosexual activity between consenting adults should be illegal. By the same token, whether women should tend to the family while men work outside the home is not a policy issue, but whether the Equal Rights Amendment should be adopted is. Since the purpose is to determine how many Americans share the Moral Majority's policy positions, not how many Americans share the Moral Majority's social and moral principles, we rely on items indicating respondents' public policy preferences.

But it is insufficient for a question simply to elicit opinions on a policy issue like abortion. A valid indicator of support for the Moral Majority platform must be framed so that it directly ties into the New Christian Right's position. We note in this respect that the Moral Majority in particular and fundamentalist Christians in general are opposed to abortion *under any circumstances*. In gauging support for the Moral Majority position on abortion, Simpson used the ABANY GSS item: "Please tell me whether or not *you* think it should be possible for a pregnant woman to obtain a *legal* abortion if the woman wants it for any reason." Thus worded, this question explicitly probes respondents' support for abortion *on demand* ("if the woman wants it for any reason"). Whether there are any circumstances under which abortion should be permitted is a very different question, and it is, in fact, a question (ABLEGAL) that was asked in the 1977 GSS: "Do you think abortions should be legal under any circumstances, legal only under certain circumstances, or never legal under any circumstances?" The response indicative of agreement with the Moral Majority position is clearly "never legal under any circumstances."

Guided by these considerations, we followed Simpson's precedent in selecting four 1977 GSS items to measure public support for the Moral Majority platform. The first of these was the same one he employed on support for school prayer ("The United States Supreme Court has ruled that no state or local government may *require* the reading of the Lord's Prayer or Bible verses in public schools. What are your views on this—do you approve or disapprove of the court ruling?"). The second was the ABLEGAL item. The GSS contains no appropriate policy preference item concerning homosexuality, but it does contain a rather different policy item that taps into the New Religious Right's conservatism on sexual matters (SEXEDUC): "Would you be for or against sex education in the public schools?" This served as the third item in our reestimation. Finally, in the late 1970s the foremost political expression of traditionalism vis-à-vis woman's role was opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment, for which the Moral Majority's contempt was readily apparent. That being the case, we adopted the GSS's ERA question ("Do you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose this amendment?") as our fourth item.

The response frequencies for these four items are shown in Table 4. What stands out is that on all three substitute items the percentage of the public espousing the Moral Majority position was substantially lower than it was on the three items Simpson used. Accordingly, in contrast to Simpson's estimate that 27% shared the Moral Majority view across the board, on our four items only *six* respondents—0.4% of the total—shared the Moral Majority view. On the possibility that our cutting points were unrealistically stringent, we subsequently relaxed the criteria for concurrence with the Moral Majority position to include those who would permit abortion under certain circumstances and those who "somewhat opposed" passage of the Equal Rights Amendment. Even with Moral Majority policy positions cast in these watered-down forms, only 72 of the 1,502 respondents for whom answers were recorded on the four items—5%—shared the Moral Majority viewpoint on all four issues.[3]

The minuscule estimates of public support for the Moral Majority

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[3] The percentage of respondents agreeing with the Moral Majority position on all four issues is a function of the marginal response distribution on each item *and* the interitem correlations. Our analysis (not shown here) indicates that Simpson's four items are slightly more highly intercorrelated than the four we have used for reestimation purposes, but differences in the marginal distributions are by far the more critical factor in determining why the overall point estimate varies so much from his four items to ours.

Table 4. Responses to Alternative "Moral Majority Platform" Items, 1977

"Do you think abortions should be legal under any circumstances, legal only under certain circumstances, or never legal under any circumstances?" (ABLEGAL)

Under any circumstances	21.8%
Under certain circumstances(a)	67.9
Never legal[a]	8.9
Don't know	0.1

"Would you be for or against sex education in the schools?" (SEXEDUC)

For	77.0%
Against[a]	20.9
Don't know	2.1

"Do you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose [the Equal Rights Amendment]?" (ERA)

Strongly favor	17.9%
Somewhat favor	40.0
Somewhat oppose(a)	13.3
Strongly oppose[a]	7.8
Don't know	20.0

"The United States Supreme Court has ruled that no state or local government may *require* the reading of the Lord's Prayer or Bible verses in public schools. What are your views on this—do you approve or disapprove of the court ruling?" (PRAYER)

Approve	33.5%
Disapprove[a]	64.2
No opinion	2.3

[a] A response classified as supportive of the Moral Majority platform.

platform that follow from our reestimation paint an entirely different picture from Simpson's original estimate. If forced to choose between the two estimates, we would defend ours as the more indicative of the Moral Majority's positions on key questions of public policy, but we surely do not intend for our figure to be taken seriously as an estimate of public support for the Moral Majority platform. The real purpose of this exercise has not been to introduce a new, improved estimate of public support for the Moral Majority platform, but rather to demonstrate in a very concrete way how perilous it is to try to estimate public support for the Moral Majority platform.

Conclusion

Although we have focused on Simpson's analysis, he is hardly alone in endeavoring to sum up opinion on a complex topic in a single number. As we noted at the outset, several analyses of the New Christian Right have engaged in the same enterprise, and support for the New Christian Right is only the latest of a host of topics that have been subjected to this treatment.

Despite numerous warnings about the fragility of survey marginals (see, e.g., Schuman, 1986), most of us are fascinated by the question of how many people favor a particular position and how many oppose it. This seems a fundamental question, and one that should be simple to answer. But the results presented here show anew that it is likely to be a question that admits no one correct answer.[4]

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[4] Our results are also of interest in another way. Several well-known studies have shown that people give very different answers to policy questions on an issue than they do to value questions on the same issue (see, e.g., Prothro and Grigg, 1960; Jackman, 1978). Yet it is easy to forget this distinction by interpreting answers to general value items as if they shed light on specific policy positions. Our results, in line with prior studies, show a pronounced difference between responses on value and policy items. However, the direction of this difference is at odds with past work. On civil liberties and racial tolerance, Americans express more liberal views to general value questions than to specific policy ones. By contrast, on the women's rights issues examined here, the reverse is true: more conservative answers were given to the general questions than to the ERA item.

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A REPLY TO "MEASURING PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THE NEW CHRISTIAN RIGHT: THE PERILS OF POINT ESTIMATION"

JOHN H. SIMPSON

Sigelman and Presser raise several interesting questions about the problems of measuring and estimating attitudinal support for the New Christian Right in the American population. Before discussing their points a preliminary observation is in order.

The naive reader of Sigelman and Presser—by that I mean the reader who has not read Simpson, 1983—will assume from the subtitle of the article ("The Perils of Point Estimation") and the text of the article that my goal was to produce a point estimate of support for the sociomoral issue platform of the Moral Majority ("In point estimation we are interested in the best single value [as opposed to the confidence interval] which can be used to estimate a parameter" [Blalock, 1960:154]). One can hardly quarrel with the argument that, except in unusual circumstances, point estimation is not acceptable in reporting survey data. However, as far as Simpson, 1983, is concerned, point estimation is not an issue because as a reading of the article makes clear the goal of the analysis was not to produce a point estimate but to test a multiple indicator measurement model using the maximum likelihood latent structure analysis technique (MLLSA) (Goodman, 1974; Clogg, 1977).

Among other things, the results of the analysis can be interpreted as a test of the hypothesis that a simple formal model of a political-issue arena fits the observed data. The assumptions of the model are: (1) a set of issues exists on which individual members of a population are either for or against each issue; (2) the population, as a whole, is divided into two camps on the issues (liberal and conservative). The model fits the data well according to a standard goodness-of-fit measure (chi-square divided by degrees of freedom).

There are a number of substantive conclusions not mentioned by

JOHN H. SIMPSON is Professor of Sociology and Chair of the Department of Sociology at the University of Toronto.

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Sigelman and Presser that follow from the good fit of the model to the observed data. The most important, perhaps, is that in 1977 the American public was divided into two camps—one liberal (the minority camp), the other conservative (the majority camp)—on certain issues that were subsequently politicized by the Moral Majority and other New Christian Right organizations. That conclusion is based on the classification of respondents by the MLLSA procedure and not on the observed joint frequency distribution of respondents' attitudes toward issues.

Sigelman and Presser's discussion is based on one cell of the observed joint frequency distribution reported by Simpson (1983:189) and on marginal frequencies from various GSS surveys. My discussion (1983) is based on latent class assignments and cell frequencies that were estimated by the MLLSA procedure. The frequencies estimated by the MLLSA procedure are not point estimates as are the frequencies in the observed joint frequency distribution. Rather they are estimates made under certain assumptions and are rejectable on statistical grounds.

Of course, a model is no better than the data on which it rests, and that is the point that Sigelman and Presser presumably would try to make if they had considered the point of my article. Let us then turn to those points of theirs that have a bearing on the observed data that were analyzed by the MLLSA procedure. These are: treatment of "don't knows" and cutting points.

Regarding "don't knows," it is true as Sigelman and Presser point out that they were not included in my 1983 analysis. The low percentages (2.9%, 4.5%, 1.5%, 2.3%) and the unequivocally clear interpretation of the remaining categories led to their exclusion. Would coding them in a "nonsupport/opposition" category, as Sigelman and Presser suggest, make a significant difference in the 16-fold table and, therefore, in the MLLSA analysis of that table? That would depend on strong systematic biases existing that would cause the small number of "don't knows" to cluster in a very small number of cells rather than being distributed randomly over the table. I can think of no reason why such biases should exist. In the meantime, however, I will accept the conservative interpretation that the results of my analysis apply to those who held opinions on the four issues while adding (as Sigelman and Presser recognize) that, proportionately, only a few Americans did not have opinions on the issues.

As far as cutting points go, Sigelman and Presser question my handling of the FEFAM item ("It is much better for everyone involved if the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and family"—Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly disagree). I dichotomized between Agree and Disagree. They think that the Moral Majority's position is better represented by drawing a line between Strongly Agree and Agree. Is it?

I think that direction rather than intensity is more important on the item. There may be some who are attitudinally within the "Moral Majority circle" on such issues as homosexuality and abortion but may be cross-pressured on the traditional female role to the extent that it implies that the female spouse in a household should not be in the labor force, but there is an economic necessity for her labor force participation. In other words, the reality of economics may take the edge off a strong endorsement of the item, but one can still hold a Moral Majority view by agreeing with the item. Any disagreement with the item would, obviously, be outside the Moral Majority pale. Prima facie any degree of agreement with the item puts one in or perilously close to the Moral Majority's view.

Having missed the point of the 1983 article, Sigelman and Presser nevertheless did discuss two methodological points that bear on the observed frequencies reported in the article: the treatment of "don't knows" and the cutting point for one attitude item. In neither case does their argument lead me to conclude that the observed frequencies should be changed.

Sigelman and Presser raise other points that have no bearing on the observed frequencies that were analyzed in Simpson, 1983. Regarding point-in-time estimates, clearly, things have changed since 1977, but that is no reason to fault an estimate of where the public was then. As I have pointed out elsewhere (Simpson, 1985b), the 1977 data provide a baseline of opinion on certain issues that were subsequently politicized by the New Religious Political Right and, as such, give us some clues about the attitudinal "raw material" that was available to the political professionals who were interested in creating the New Religious Political Right. As the burden of the interpretive sections of Simpson, 1983, was to account for the rise of the Moral Majority, it seemed to make good sense to ascertain the attitudinal situation in the American population that existed as a resource for those who wished to construct a politics of sociomoral issues. Clearly, over-time investigation of attitudes is needed, but that point does not invalidate the estimate based on the 1977 data and its interpretive usefulness.

The final section of Sigelman and Presser's article—"Single Indicators of Complex Concepts"—is, in my view, the most interesting section but perhaps not for reasons that the authors themselves would agree with. However, before discussing the section it should be noted that the title of the section is misleading if it is taken as a reference to the analysis in Simpson, 1983. As pointed out above, the point of that analysis was to test a multiple indicator measurement model.

In the final section of the article, Sigelman and Presser demonstrate that by choosing items that tap attitudes toward policies, one can show that support for the Moral Majority is weak. I have no quarrel with that conclusion. The focus of my Moral Majority research, however, has not been on policy formation but on what might be called "image arenas" in electoral politics and their uses and effects (Simpson, 1983, 1985a, 1985b, 1987a, 1987b). The research falls within the broad scope of the research tradition that is concerned with "symbolic politics" (Edelman, 1964; Gusfield, 1963). That focus has implications for the choice of attitude items for analysis. In selecting attitude items I have always tried to avoid, where possible, items that tap attitudes toward policies or specific legislative/judicial acts in favor of items that appear to tap diffuse values or orientations that are manipulated by the political professionals and media experts in the image arenas. Thus, ABANY (abortion on demand) was chosen rather than ABLEGAL (legalization of abortion) and FEFAM (women should be in the home) rather than ERA (Equal Rights Amendment) from the 1977 GSS.

Given that my concern has been image politics, Sigelman and Presser would undoubtedly quarrel with the language that I used in the 1983 article. There I said that I was dealing with issues related to the "platform" of the Moral Majority. According to them a platform "is an agenda for action, a set of *policy statements*." While that may be the case, a platform in American politics can also be a set of promises and statements that have little if any bearing on the actual behaviors of elected officials or the formation of public policy but are designed to hook the "electoral fish" (voters) by stimulating moods and dispositions. "Once, when [H. L. Mencken] was closeted with a Presidential candidate in the latter's drawing room on a campaign train, the matter of such promises came up. The candidate conceded that the promises he was making at every whistle stop could never be carried out, except through a miracle" (Cairns, 1969:213).

Despite the civics textbooks, there are major differences between electoral politics and the politics of public policy formation. Sigelman and Presser do not seem to take those differences very seriously.

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THE POLLS—A Report
HUMAN RIGHTS

ANNE E. GEYER AND
ROBERT Y. SHAPIRO

The role of the United States in the protection and promotion of human rights in other countries has long been a subject of debate in this country. Since World War II, the American public has become increasingly aware of human rights violations throughout the world, particularly those violations that infringe upon the right to life, integrity of the person, and fundamental freedoms, such as freedom of expression, movement, and due process of law. The human rights stand of President Jimmy Carter and public opposition to U.S. support for repressive Third World governments added to public concern for human rights. When the issue has been raised, there has been little public opposition to defending, in principle, international human rights: Americans oppose the murder or arbitrary imprisonment of political dissenters in all countries, and torture is opposed without reservation.

Nevertheless, throughout U.S. history the defense of human rights in other countries has been a strikingly unimportant issue for the American public (cf. Bachrach and Baratz, 1963; Chomsky, 1978). The low salience of the issue may be attributed to the fact that, up until recently, there have been few incentives for U.S. political leaders to keep human rights on the political agenda, and foreign governments have no incentives for making information available about violations of rights in their own countries.

The severe problems entailed in compiling accurate data on human rights violations in countries whose governments are not eager to have such information made public make the incidence of human rights violations very difficult to study empirically. Freedom House and the *World Handbook of Political and Social Indicators* (Taylor and Jodice,

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ANNE E. GEYER is a graduate student in the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University. ROBERT Y. SHAPIRO is Associate Professor of Political Science and a researcher at Columbia's Center for the Social Sciences. The authors thank Tom W. Smith, Nora Dell (Chicago Council on Foreign Relations), Paula Newberg, Benjamin Page, Steven Farkas, John Young, and Louise Wickham and Samuel Suratt (CBS News) for useful discussions and assistance in assembling the data.

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1983), for example, have compiled quantitative data on worldwide human rights conditions, but these data have been criticized for not accurately reflecting the level and gravity of human rights violations (cf. Goldstein, 1986; Stohl et al., 1986). The news media in the United States have been constrained in their reporting of human rights issues because they lack access to information about human rights conditions abroad. They are also affected by the inattention to the issue by American leaders whose statements and actions they follow and report (e.g., Gans, 1979).

When President Carter took office, government rhetoric focused upon international human rights issues much more so than in the past. The Reagan administration, however, openly reversed the White House position of the Carter years. As a result we might have expected some visible changes in public opinion and government policies. The best evidence shows that despite any exaltation and good intentions during the Carter years, no appreciable changes on either front occurred. The same held under Reagan. Although it is disputed whether any inferences can be made from the limited data on human rights violations, U.S. diplomatic relations and foreign aid to different countries have never been related appreciably to the human rights policies of their governments (cf. Carleton and Stohl, 1987; Schoultz, 1981). All that changed under the Carter administration was the *rhetoric* (e.g., Carleton and Stohl, 1985).

Human rights did receive a dramatic boost in media attention during Carter's early years in office (some rough evidence for this is presented below, although there are clearly difficulties in tracing this because of changes in the ways human rights reports have been indexed), and while this coverage did decline after peaking in 1977, it did not return to its earlier low levels after Carter left the White House. When Reagan took office, however, the content of the debate about human rights shifted more toward oppression in the Soviet Union and the meaning and consequences of international terrorism.

There has been little indication of change in public opinion toward human rights as a foreign policy goal during the Carter and Reagan years. (One exception is public opinion toward South Africa and apartheid, which warrants attention as a separate subject, and these data are not included below.) While most Americans say they are in favor of protecting human rights abroad, support for human rights diminishes to varying degrees when it is suggested that such protection might interfere with the attainment of other foreign policy goals such as the containment of communism or the maintenance of friendly relations with countries perceived to be economically or strategically important to the United States. With respect to the measures that should be employed toward the protection of human rights abroad, the survey data suggest that the public prefers to maintain relations with most countries and to have the United States use "quiet diplomacy" to pressure foreign governments to improve human rights conditions—with uncertain results.

Strikingly few questions about human rights have been repeated verbatim in national surveys, making it extremely difficult to track opinion trends. We would suggest that many of the existing survey items be replicated, rather than new questions created each time human rights becomes a front-page issue. The fragmentary nature of the survey data, of course, is a finding in itself, consistent with the above claims about the salience of the human rights issue. This, along with the unusually high percentage of "don't know" responses, indicates that human rights is not a salient issue for the American public.

The survey questions reported here were taken from the files of the Policy Change and Public Opinion Change Project, originally at NORC, University of Chicago. These data were compiled from published and unpublished sources, and with the assistance of the Roper Center (including the POLL database), University of Connecticut; the Louis Harris Data Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, University of Michigan; and the NORC Library. Further information about these data can be obtained from the appropriate archive or survey organization.

ABC/WP—American Broadcasting Company/*Washington Post*
Gallup—Gallup Polls, American Institute for Public Opinion
Harris—Louis Harris and Associates
LAT—*Los Angeles Times*
NBC/AP—National Broadcasting Company/Associated Press
NYT/CBS—*New York Times*/Columbia Broadcasting System
NORC—NORC, University of Chicago
ORC—Opinion Research Corporation
Roper—Roper Organization
Yankelovich—Yankelovich, Skelly, and White, Inc., including surveys conducted for *Time*

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Media Coverage

NUMBER OF STORIES ON HUMAN RIGHTS

New York Times

	Freedom & Human Rights	*Torture*	*Political Prisoners*	*Amnesty International*	*Total*
1976[a]	120	78	—	23	221
1977	466	53	1	44	563
1978	474	14	—	15	503
1979	460	31	1	18	509
1980	340	39	—	7	386
1981	376	33	223[b]	9	641
1982	317	26	126	7	476
1983	319	23	120	2	464
1984	346	34	208	7	595
1985	309	24	142	2	477
1986	309	36	154	10	509

SOURCE: *New York Times Index*, 1975 to 1986.

NOTE: Stories indexed under "Human Rights" were tallied first. Some of these stories were indexed again under one of the other three categories. Such stories were *not* counted twice.

[a] Prior to 1976, the *New York Times* did not include foreign countries in its "Freedom & Human Rights" category.

[b] This apparently represents a shift in classification. In 1982, the largest number of entries under the "Political Prisoners" category were stories about Northern Ireland. In 1982 and 1983 the majority of stories listed dealt with Poland. From 1984 to 1986, Poland, South Africa, Cuba, South Korea, and the Soviet Union predominate in this category.

Washington Post

	Human Rights	*Torture*	*Political Dissent*	*Amnesty International*	*Total*
1975	13	9	61	—	83
1976	66	18	74	2	160
1977	379	10	147	4	540
1978	132	6	177	3	318
1979	77	6	106	5	194
1980	68	3	124	2	197
1981	125	3	64	6	198
1982[a]	208	—	51	—	259
1983	224	4	23	1	252
1984	94	4	54	2	154
1985	71	—	56	1	128
1986	62	11	79	6	158

SOURCE: *Washington Post Index*, 1975 to 1986.

[a] Beginning in 1982 the category "Human Rights" is replaced by "Civil Rights" (with subheadings by country) and the category "Political Dissent" is replaced by "Political Prisoners."

Los Angeles Times

	Human Rights	*Torture*	*Political Dissent*	*Amnesty International*	*Total*
1975	5	2	34	—	41
1976	16	5	12	1	34
1977	230	1	33	11	275
1978	64	3	115	2	184
1979	78	—	60	5	143
1980	62	2	89	—	153
1981	88	—	66	2	156
1982	99	1	44	—	144
1983	96	—	51	1	148
1984[a]	108	11	85	5	209
1985	90	16	64	2	172
1986	86	12	75	13	186

SOURCE: *Los Angeles Times Index*, 1975 to 1986.

[a] Beginning in 1984 the category "Human Rights" is replaced by "Freedom & Human Rights" and the category "Political Dissent" is replaced by "Political Prisoners."

Newsweek and *Time*

	Civil Rights (Intl. Aspects)	*Torture*	*Political Prisoners*	*Amnesty International*	*Total*
1975	—, 1	1,—	6, 6	—	7, 8
1976	—, 2	1, 1	2, 6	—	3, 9
1977	19,13	—	9, 7	1, 1	29,21
1978	1, 3	—	7, 6	—	8, 9
1979	5, 6	1,—	9, 7	—	15,13
1980	4, 4	—	3, 3	—	7, 7
1981	7, 2	—, 1	19,20	—	26,23
1982	6,10	2,—	7, 8	—	15,18

	Civil Rights (Intl. Aspects)	*Torture*	*Political Prisoners*	*Amnesty International*	*Total*
1983	3, 5	—	16, 6	1,—	20,11
1984	2, 1	1, 1	15, 9	—	18,11
1985	9, 7	—, 1	7, 4	—	16,12
1986	2, 1	—	16,11	—, 1	18,13

Source: *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature*, 1975 to 1986.
Note: The first figure listed in each column represents stories in *Newsweek*, the second represents stories in *Time*.

NUMBER OF NEWS ITEMS ON HUMAN RIGHTS

CBS Evening News

	Human Rights	*Torture*	*Political Prisoners*	*Total*
1975	6	1	—	7
1976	6	1	7	14
1977	93	—	3	96
1978	29	—	11	40
1979	6	2	2	10
1980	17	2	8	27
1981	25	—	8	33
1982	16	—	2	18
1983	26	2	4	32
1984	16	3	5	24
1985	38	7	1	46
1986	36	4	38	78

Source: Data obtained from CBS News. Data from other networks were not available. The Vanderbilt Television News Archive's *News Index and Abstracts* does not use these types of keywords for tracking human rights issues. Stories are indexed simply by country.

Salience of Human Rights as a Foreign Policy Issue

Gallup: What do you feel are the two or three biggest foreign policy problems facing the United States today that you would like to see the federal government do something about?

	11/78	*10–11/82*[a]	*1986*[a]
Mid-East	20%	19%	7%
Dealings with Russia	13	15	22
Terrorism	—	—	20
Reduce foreign aid	18	16	9
Balance of trade	12	13	15
Stay out of other countries' affairs	11	8	5
Nuclear arms race	7	13	16
Keeping peace/Better foreign relations	9	8	7
Latin/So. America	2	5	10

	11/78	*10–11/82*[a]	*1986*[a]
Other[b]	52	60	57
Human rights campaign	1	[c]	1
Don't know	21	16	16
	N = 1,546	*N* = 1,547	*N* = 1,585

[a] The 1982 and 1986 question eliminates the phrase "that you would like to see the federal government do something about."

[b] Total exceeds 100% due to multiple responses.

[c] Less than .5%.

Roper, ORC: (Of course, everyone is more interested in some things being carried in the news than in others.) Is news about . . . President Carter's criticisms of countries that violate human rights of their citizens . . . something you have recently been following fairly closely, just following casually, or not paying much attention to?

	Roper *3/77*	*ORC* *5/77*[a]
Following closely/Great deal	46%	27%
Following casually/Fair amount	37	40
Very little about		25
No attention/Nothing at all/Don't know	16	7
No opinion		1
	N = 2,001	*N* = 1,011

[a] How much have you heard or read about human rights as a foreign affairs issue—a great deal, a fair amount, very little, or nothing at all?

Defending Human Rights in General

Harris, Gallup: I'd like to read you some statements people have made about international affairs today. For each, tell me whether you tend to agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly. The U.S. should put pressure on countries which systematically violate basic human rights.

	Harris *12/74*	*Gallup* *11/78*[a]
Agree strongly	36%	31%
Agree somewhat	32	36
Disagree somewhat	15	17
Disagree strongly	7	8
Not sure, don't know	11	8
	N = 1,513	*N* = 1,546

[a] (I am going to read some statements about international affairs and U.S. foreign policy. For each, tell me if you tend to agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly with the statement.) . . .

Roper: (I'm going to read you some things President Carter has done or been identified with. Regardless of your overall opinions about Carter, for each one would you tell me if you approve of President Carter's position, don't approve of it, or have no opinion?) . . . His public criticism of nations that deny human rights to their citizens.

	9–10/77	*3/78*	*3/79*
Approve	59%	55%	53%
Disapprove	19	20	24
Mixed feelings/No opinion/ Don't know	21	25	23
	N = 2,004	*N* = 2,003	*N* = 2,004

ORC: (Now, let's turn to foreign affairs. I'm going to read some statements concerning various areas the federal government may be dealing with during the 1980's. As I read each statement, please tell me if you think the federal government should do more, should do less, or should continue to do about the same.) . . . Working to protect human rights in other countries.

	11/80	*12/82*
Do more	39%	39%
Do about the same	35	37
Do less	22	—
Do less/No opinion	—	24
No opinion	4	—
	N = 1,013	*N* = 1,005

Gallup: (I am going to read a list of possible foreign policy goals that the United States might have. For each one please say whether you think that it should be a very important foreign policy goal of the United States, a somewhat important foreign policy goal, or not an important goal at all.) . . . Promoting and defending human rights in other countries.

	11/78	*10–11/82*	*1986*
Very important	39%	43%	42%
Somewhat important	40	42	45
Not important	14	9	9
Not sure/Don't know	7	6	4
	N = 1,546	*N* = 1,547	*N* = 1,585

ORC: Again thinking of human rights in terms of freedom of expression, freedom of movement, and political prisoners, do you think there are any conditions under which a government is justified in suspending the human rights of its citizens, or are there no conditions under which human rights should be suspended? (If "yes," ask:) Under which one or more of these conditions, if any, is a country justified in suspending the human rights of its citizens?

	5/77
Yes, when there is political and ideological dissent	4%
Yes, when there is terrorist activity	13
Yes, when there has been a complete breakdown of law and order	23
Yes, no opinion about which conditions	4
No, there are no conditions	54
No opinion	14
	N = 1,011

NOTE: Adds to more than 100% due to multiple responses.

Diplomacy: Friends, Foes, and U.S. Aid

ORC: Suppose a country supplied the United States with a critical raw material or was geographically important to our national defense, but treated its citizens in a way that the United States does not approve of. In this case, should we or should we not include the human rights issue in our foreign policy toward this country?

	5/77	*5/77*[a]
Yes, should include human rights issue	64%	66%
No, should not include human rights issue	25	25
No opinion	11	9
	N = ca. 506	*N* = ca. 506

NOTE: Split ballot; total *N* = 1,011.

[a] Suppose a country DOES NOT supply the United States with any critical raw material. . . . should we or should we not include the human rights issue in our foreign policy toward this country?

LAT, NYT/CBS: What do you think the United States ought to do about countries that violate basic human rights but are friendly toward us and opposed to the communists? Do you think we should put pressure on those countries to improve human rights and risk losing their friendship . . . or do you think we should seek the support of those countries in spite of the way they treat their own people?

	LAT 4/81	*LAT 1/82*[a]	*LAT 7/82*[b]	*NYT/ CBS 4/86*[c]
Pressure (strongly)/Risk/ Criticize	44%	28%	47%	54%
Pressure (not so strongly)		13		
Support/Ignore viol./ Don't criticize	35	28	32	31
Support (not so strongly)		17		
Both/Neither/Depends	7	4	7	3
Not sure/No opinion	13	9	12	12
Refused	1	1	2	
	N = 1,406	*N* = 1,509	*N* = 1,102	*N* = 1,601

[a] What do you think the United States. . . . do you think we should seek the support of those countries and not make an issue about their internal affairs? (Wait for reply) Do you feel strongly about that, or not so strongly?

[b] What do you think the United States. . . . do you think we should seek the support of those countries to fight communism in spite of the human rights which are denied to their own people?

[c] Should the United States criticize governments that deny human rights to their citizens, even if those governments support us on important foreign policy issues?

ORC: I am going to name several countries. In each case, suppose the country treated its citizens in a way that the United States does not approve of, such as the existence of major problems with freedom of expression, freedom of movement, and political prisoners. If . . . (country) . . . treated its citizens in a way that we did not approve of, what action should the United States take? Should the United States . . . have no relations until its citizens are treated better; maintain relations, but be critical in public; maintain relations, and quietly try to improve the situation; ignore the situation?

				5/77				
	Uruguay	*Uganda*	*USSR*	*So. Africa*	*Nicaragua*	*France*	*Chile*	*Brazil*
Have no relations	6%	9%	8%	7%	6%	6%	6%	6%
Maintain relations, criticize publicly	18	22	25	22	19	21	20	20
Maintain relations, quietly improve	50	44	46	51	50	53	56	53
Ignore situation	11	12	13	10	11	10	12	10
No opinion	15	13	8	10	14	10	6	11
				N = 1,011				

Gallup, ABC/WP: Which do you think is the greater cause of unrest in Central America today: subversion from Cuba, Nicaragua and the Soviet Union, or poverty and lack of human rights in the area?

	Gallup	*ABC/WP*	*ABC/WP*	*ABC/WP*	*Gallup*
	4/83[a]	*5/83*	*8/83*	*5/84*	*4–5/87*
Subversion	29%	22%	25%	30%	19%
Poverty/Lack of rights	50	57	59	51	51
Both equally	16	8	7	9	18
Don't know	5	13	9	10	12
	N = 859	*N* = 1,501	*N* = 1,505	*N* = 1,511	*N* = 4,244

[a] Asked of those who knew which side the United States was backing in El Salvador—47%.

North and South Korea

Gallup: Now I am going to ask you specifically your impression of the situation in South Korea and North Korea today as it concerns the human rights issue, that is, the degree to which the rights and liberties of their individual citizens are protected. What is your impression of the situation in *North Korea* concerning human rights—very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable?

	4/78	*9/79*[a]
Very favorable	1%	4%
Somewhat favorable	8	14
Somewhat unfavorable	22	24
Very unfavorable	32	29
Don't know	37	29
	N = 773	*N* = 1,065

[a] And what is your impression of the situation in North Korea concerning human rights—very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable?

Gallup: Now I am going to ask you specifically your impression of the situation in South Korea and North Korea today as it concerns the human rights issue, that is, the degree to which the rights and liberties of their individual citizens are protected. What is your impression about the situation in South Korea concerning human rights—very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable?

	4/78	*9/79*[a]
Very favorable	4%	7%
Somewhat favorable	27	25
Somewhat unfavorable	22	24
Very unfavorable	12	15
Don't know	35	29
	N = 773	N = 1,065

[a] Now I am going to . . . are protected. First, . . .

Yankelovich, Gallup: President Carter says that he is trying to bring more morality to our country's foreign policy. Some people feel he is doing the right things, others that he is making unwise decisions. Do you personally feel that President Carter should or should not: Continue to give aid to countries like South Korea because they are essential to our defense—even if they suppress human rights in that country?

	Yankelovich *3/77*	*Gallup* *9/79*[a]	*Yankelovich* *5/81*[b]
Should give aid	29%	26%	23%
Should not give aid/ make conditional	50	49	67
Not sure/Don't know	21	25	10
	N = 1,004	N = 1,065	N = 1,221

[a] Would you favor or oppose making the U.S. security commitment to South Korea conditional upon an improvement in the human rights situation?

[b] Now, I'd like to know how you feel about a number of important issues that face the country. Do you favor or oppose: Giving economic and military support to anti-communist allies such as South Korea even if they violate human rights?

Soviet Union

Yankelovich: President Carter says that he is trying to bring more morality to our country's foreign policy. Some people feel he is doing the right things, others that he is making unwise decisions. Do you personally feel that President Carter should or should not: Continue to complain to the Russians about the suppression of human rights even if it slows down détente and the chances for an arms agreement.

	3/77
Should	55%
Should not	26
Not sure	19
	N = 1,004

NBC/AP: Do you think that the United States should break off negotiations with Russia aimed at limiting nuclear weapons because of Russian violations of human rights, or do you think negotiations should continue?

	8/78
Break off negotiations	15%
Continue negotiations	76
Not sure	9
	N = 1,600

Harris, Yankelovich, Roper: Do you feel that President Carter's staunch and continued emphasis on the human rights of Russian dissidents will improve his ability to come to agreement with the Russians, will hurt his ability to negotiate with them, or won't make much difference?

	Harris *3/77*	*Yankelovich* *3/77*[a]	*Roper* *4–5/77*[b]
Improve ability/Increase chances	20%	16%	9%
Hurt ability/Decrease chances	23	27	31
No difference/Won't affect	38	58	46
Not sure/Don't know	19		15
	N = 1,549	*N* = 1,004	*N* = 2,002

[a] Do you personally feel that by taking a hard line with the Russians on the suppression of human rights in that country that we are helping or hurting our relations with the U.S.S.R. (Soviet Union)—or don't you think it will make that much difference?

[b] We are currently engaged in talks to reach an arms agreement with Russia, and Russia is one of the countries President Carter has criticized for denying its citizens human rights. Do you think Carter's criticisms will decrease the chances of reaching an arms agreement with Russia, or increase the chances of reaching an agreement, or won't affect the outcome of the talks one way or the other?

Harris: (Now let me read you some reasons which some people have given for the U.S. and Russia having failed to come to an agreement in their Strategic Arms Limitation Talks [SALT]. For each reason, tell me if you tend to agree or disagree.) . . . President Carter hurt his chances of getting an agreement on SALT because he kept talking about how the Russians were violating human rights.

	3/77	*7/78*[a]
Agree/Has hurt chances	46%	62%
Disagree/Has not hurt chances	25	26
Not sure	29	12
	N = 1,540	*N* = 1,238

[a] Do you feel that President Carter's continuing emphasis on the Russian violations of human rights of dissidents in that country has . . . Made it more difficult to reach an agreement with the Russians on SALT (Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty) arms control and other important issues?

Harris, Yankelovich: (Let me read you some recent foreign policy stands President Carter has taken. For each, tell me if you favor or oppose that stand.) . . . His insistence on criticizing Russia for violating human rights of dissidents in that country?

	Harris *5–6/77*	*Yankelovich* *3/83*[a]
Favor/Great deal of emphasis	55%	24%
Some emphasis		30
Oppose/Not much emphasis	21	18
Not familiar		25
Not sure	24	3
	N = 1,625	*N* = 1,008

[a] (There are a number of issues and areas of dispute between the United States and the Soviet Union these days. Some are more important than others. In dealing with the Soviet Union, how much emphasis do you think our government should place on each of the following—a great deal of emphasis, some emphasis, or not that much emphasis—or don't you feel familiar enough to say?) . . . Stepped-up crackdown on human rights and dissenters in the Soviet Union.

NYT/CBS, LAT, Gallup: President Reagan says he wants to talk about human rights violations in the Soviet Union at the summit meeting (with Gorbachev). Do you think this is the right time to raise that issue, or not?

	NYT/CBS *11/85*	*LAT* *11/85*[a]	*Gallup* *11/85*[b]
Right time/#1 Topic/Very important	43%	48%	46%
Useful to bring up	—	27	—
Not right time/Don't bring up	47	18	—
Don't know/Not sure	10	7	—
	N = 1,659	N = 2,041	N = 588

[a] National Security Advisor Robert McFarlane says that human rights will be a number-one topic at the (November 1985 Reagan–Gorbachev) summit. Do you think Soviet violations of human rights should be at the top of the agenda, or not? (If not) Do you think it would be useful to bring up the subject at this time?

[b] How important is it that the following issue be discussed at the Geneva summit (between Reagan and Gorbachev)? . . . Human rights in the U.S.S.R. (Soviet Union/Russia). [Partial response only.]